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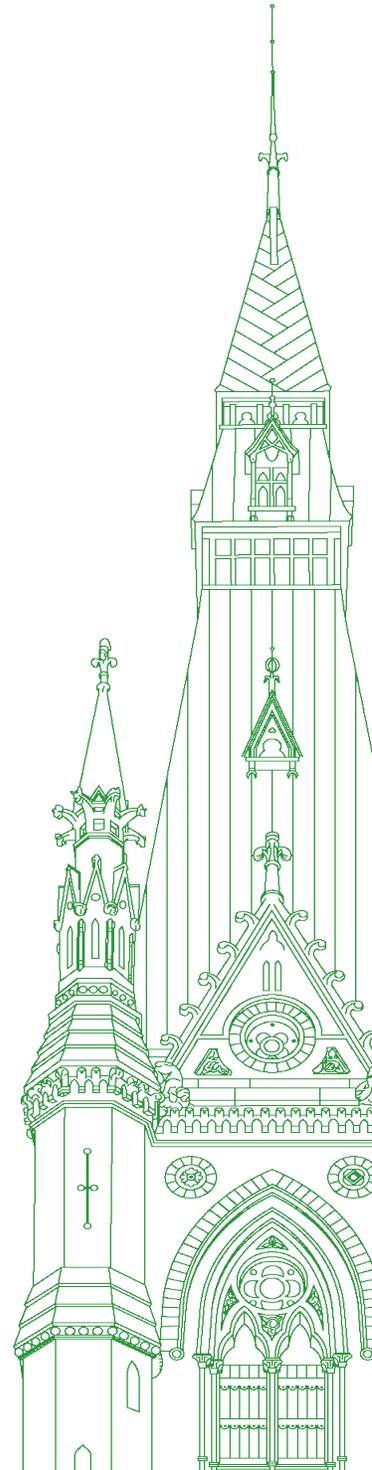
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Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Chair: Mr. Scott Simms



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• (1550)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.)): Hello, everyone, and welcome back. It's good to see everyone.

My goodness, we have a full house. What a very popular committee we have. Let's make a motion bragging to other committees about just how many people are watching here.

Thank you so much for being here. This of course is meeting number three. Today we have a briefing with the Minister of Canadian Heritage on his mandate letter.

The way we normally structure this is to have up to 10 minutes for the minister and officials, if need be. We're also going to take questions accordingly, and we will pass routine motions, according to the schedule, with the individual members.

Mr. Blaney, you would like to make a comment.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Yes, Mr. Chair.

I would like to mention that my office and I took steps for the appearance of the Minister of Canadian Heritage to be televised, and I was informed that it wasn't possible. I would be prepared to amend or propose a motion to ensure that the meeting is televised every time there is a ministerial appearance.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Blaney, for your intervention.

I'm going to respond to that. I was notified approximately two and a half hours ago about having this televised, and it occurred to me in my conversation with the clerk that it would not be possible. We would have to do a switch with another committee and it just wouldn't be possible in the time frame that we had.

However, Mr. Blaney, I will say this. It is normal for us to have "to have it televised" at the end of the motion. It occurred to me, and it was one of those things that, as it occurred to me, it quickly left and didn't occur to me any longer. That being said, I will take the responsibility for that. I've been here 16 years. I've been in many committee meetings. I have seen that, as you've described, many times, so I will take responsibility for that, Mr. Blaney. You have my deepest apologies. I should have suggested it at the time, even though it was not in the motion. As lessons are learned, I can

assure you we'll not do this again, as I'm sure my clerk will remind me.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Blaney, you have my apologies as does anyone else who feels this should be televised, since it will not be. It should be.

Minister Guilbeault, it's good to see you, sir. Thank you for joining us.

We would normally set this out from 3:30 to 4:30. With your indulgence, we would still like to fill the 60 minutes. I'm looking for some direction on this as to whether you can be here until about 4:50.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Absolutely, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: We understand that the deputy minister, Madame Laurendeau, has to leave at 4:30.

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau (Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): No, it's 5:30. I thought earlier that the question period would be longer.

The Chair: I see. You're here until 5:30.

Well, that's an extra hour. That's wonderful. Thank you for joining us.

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, Mr. Minister. You have 10 minutes.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Committee members and colleagues, I am very pleased to be here with you. I didn't have time to say hello to everyone around the table when I arrived. We are a little pressed for time.

With your agreement, Mr. Chair, and if the committee would like, I could stay longer than the scheduled 60 minutes, if necessary. It's up to you and the committee.

I had started distributing reusable mugs, in the colours of the different parties, as much as possible, but I ran out of time and ended with my colleagues in the Liberal Party. As you know, I'm from the environmental sector, and I think that governments have to make an effort, as do all of us.

[English]

We are gathered today on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe. I'd like to take a moment to emphasize that this acknowledgement is not merely symbolic but demonstrates our government's commitment to reconciliation with indigenous people. It is in this spirit that we're working with our partners to address key priorities, which, in my mandate, include the implementation of the Indigenous Languages Act, and the establishment of a framework for repatriating indigenous cultural property and ancestral remains.

The Métis nation is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, a milestone that coincides with Manitoba's entry into Confederation. Our government recognizes the role that the Métis people played in this important moment in our history.

[Translation]

I am accompanied today by the deputy minister of Canadian Heritage, H el ene Laurendeau, and Jean-St eph en Pich e, the senior assistant deputy minister of Cultural Affairs.

I'd like to take a moment to congratulate Ms. Laurendeau and her entire team. We learned recently that the department's annual survey had a historically high response rate. 46% of employees completed the survey, and 93% of them stated that the Department of Canadian Heritage was an excellent workplace. Congratulations, Ms. Laurendeau, Mr. Pich e and the entire team.

While I'm offering congratulations, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Simms, on being elected chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Greetings also to the new and returning members of the committee.

I'd like to acknowledge the valuable support I receive from my parliamentary secretaries. Julie Dabrusin, who is returning to this committee as a member, assists me with my Canadian Heritage files, and Adam van Koeverden, who is a member of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, supports me in sport files with his lifetime of experience.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you for the first time.

In November, I had the honour of being entrusted with the responsibilities of Minister of Canadian Heritage. Those who know me know I'm an activist at heart.

● (1555)

[English]

I never commit halfway to the causes I believe in. Over the past few months, I have been able to draw many parallels between the field of environmentalism on the one hand and arts, culture and sport on the other. I've met passionate, dedicated people in organizations big and small, who often have to juggle all kinds of factors to successfully get their work done. It is, above all, a very close-knit community. I've already met representatives from more than

375 organizations in five provinces, from the Atlantic to the Prairies, and I'll have the privilege of meeting with other fascinating people in the coming weeks, in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Yukon.

I know this dynamic well, and I'm already working to support that community with all the energy I'm known for.

[Translation]

My responsibilities go far beyond promoting culture and sport. First, I'd like to touch on a number of topics in my speech, and then I'll be happy to answer your questions about the mandate the Prime Minister has given me.

As parliamentarians, we all have a mandate to fight climate change. That is clearly stated in the Speech from the Throne and in every minister's mandate letter, not to mention that, last summer, the House passed a motion on climate emergency.

From my first meetings with the culture and sport community, I've observed a real willingness to take positive action to make our cultural and sport organizations even greener. I personally want to help all Canadians who want to move forward in that direction. We have some inspiring examples.

One of the world's biggest sport events wants to be part of the solution: the Olympic and Paralympic Games have developed sustainable practices for the Tokyo games this summer.

The Canada Games Council has signed a framework agreement on sport for climate action, an initiative of the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee.

[English]

Closer to home, the Canadian Museum of Nature is already raising awareness about climate change by reminding us that nature is one of Canada's most precious resources. The Prime Minister has asked me to work with them and other national museums to raise even more public awareness of climate change.

My work with museums doesn't stop there. I'm also going to ensure that our museum policy is aligned with the 21st century. Because our museums are exceptional showcases of Canadian history and culture, their collections must be accessible to everyone.

[Translation]

One of my priority files, which you heard Ms. Yale and Ms. Simard speak about on Monday, is the modernization of the Broadcasting Act. Our government understands that a strong, equitable and flexible broadcasting system is crucial to meeting the expectations of Canadians and the challenges of the digital age. To that end, urgent action is needed.

We have reviewed the report of the Legislative Review Panel. And I am hopeful that we can present a broadcasting bill in the House in the next few months.

I can assure you that we will not be regulating the news media, and that we will preserve a strong and independent information sector, as well as a free and open Internet.

[*English*]

The Broadcasting Act has an impact on several organizations in my portfolio, as they include a large audiovisual component that feeds the digital environment: the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, CBC/Radio Canada. These are all independent organizations that keep us informed, provide us with high-quality content and contribute to our shared identity. We are proud to support them.

I'd like to emphasize that CBC/Radio Canada is an essential part of Canada's media ecosystem and a key contributor of Canadian content. As part of the modernization of the Broadcasting Act, we're looking at ways to strengthen the regional mandate of our national public broadcaster.

[*Translation*]

The news media environment is changing, and we are responding to the call of our newspapers with all the rigour necessary to ensure their independence. This is the very foundation of a healthy democracy. We have introduced tax measures, and we are injecting \$10 million a year to increase news coverage in underserved communities.

We will also invest up to \$172 million over five years to stabilize the Canada media fund and ensure the success of our creative industries in the digital age.

Finally, I am working closely with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry on a number of issues that are closely related to the information sector. This includes actions to ensure a safe and secure environment free of hate and bias on social networks—a subject you seem interested in exploring further.

We could also mention protecting Canadians' personal data, or updating the Copyright Act.

• (1600)

[*English*]

Having written three books, the last of which dealt with the positive and negative impacts of digital technologies, I'm quite interested in the issue of copyright. In this regard, I'd like to thank members of this committee from the 42nd Parliament for taking time to review the Copyright Act and the remuneration of artists and the creative industries. Your recommendations now allow us to consider how those who shape our culture can fully benefit from their work.

[*Translation*]

Before moving on to another topic, I'd like to touch on the work that has been done so far under the Creative Export Strategy. This is an important initiative that continues with Global Affairs, as well as with all our partners at the Frankfurt Book Fair, and in various past and future international missions.

Canadian cultural content is among the best in the world; we need to promote it internationally and allow our creators to profit from the international market.

[*English*]

Now let's venture into the world of sport. I really enjoy immersing myself in this world. I can count on a parliamentary secretary, Adam van Koeverden, who has a long track record in the world of sport. The member of Parliament for Brome—Missisquoi, who sits on this committee, can also testify to the benefits of sport, as she is an Olympic cyclist. It's kind of rare to have two Olympic athletes on one committee. I think we're very fortunate.

[*Translation*]

For several years now, our government has been working harder to make sport safe, welcoming and accessible to everyone. A great deal of work has been done, and continues to be done, to raise awareness about concussions, harassment and discrimination. I'm delighted to pick up the torch. Sport is a great school of life. It teaches us team spirit, good citizenship and the joy of healthy competition. We also have extraordinary examples of determination and perseverance in top athletes like Bianca Andreescu and Laurent Duvernay-Tardif.

I will continue to help the Canadian sport community build a healthy society where all young people, especially indigenous youth, can see themselves reflected and feel that they're part of something. In this Olympic year, we can expect great moments that inspire pride. I know that in my house, my family will have their eyes glued to the screen. I'll even have the privilege of being present for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

[*English*]

We can all be proud of the incredible work of our athletes. They have been training for a long time to get to Tokyo and secure a place on the podium. We'll all be cheering them on this summer, united and proud to see the maple leaf so well represented.

Mr. Chair, esteemed colleagues, thank you for your attention. I'd be pleased to answer your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that.

Yes, you're right, we do have some decorated athletes here on our committee. We welcome, of course, Madame Bessette and Mr. van Koeverden.

We also have, on the other side of the sport coin, a former broadcaster. Mr. Kevin Waugh is the former voice of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. He's been here for quite some time, a hall of famer in his own right, I would say, or at least he should be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blaney, you have six minutes.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Minister, welcome to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Minister, in your speech, you expressed the desire to preserve a strong and independent information sector, and you also mentioned that you are responding to the call of your newspapers. My first question is this: Are you familiar with section 19?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Section 19 of which act?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Section 19 of the Income Tax Act.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: No, honestly, I don't know it by heart.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Minister, I invite you to take a look at section 19, because the Canadian media as a whole is specifically asking you to correct and repeal section 19. As you know, this section allows the Web giants to benefit from hundreds of millions of dollars in tax exemptions. It's very simple. As you know, we had reservations about the measure you are putting in place to help the media. Essentially, instead of giving money to the Canadian media, we need to stop giving money to the Web giants.

Would you be willing to repeal section 19 to avoid subsidizing the Web giants at the expense of our Canadian companies, when there is advertising that goes to market?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you very much, Mr. Blaney.

As you probably know, the Income Tax Act does not come under the purview of the Department of Canadian Heritage. However, I would be happy to put you in touch with—

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Guilbeault, don't pull the Mélanie Joly trick on me by telling me that the GST falls under the Department of Finance. You have committed, among other things, to introducing measures, including imposing the GST on the Web giants. We are talking about the same kind of measures.

We want to know if you're there for the industry, for heritage, to protect our businesses, and to protect our media, who are asking you to repeal section 19. We don't want you to shovel this into the Minister of Finance's backyard. We want you to go to him and tell him that you are going to put an end to undue subsidies to the Web giants and close this tax loophole, which should not exist and which is being denounced by all media. There is the letter from the media, but all the cultural industries are also asking you to do this.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I think that the 375 representatives of arts, culture and media organizations that I have met with over the past four months will be able to say that they don't have the impression that I'm running away from anything. However, the reality is still that I am Minister of Canadian Heritage, not Minister of Finance.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Minister, do you like cooking?

• (1605)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I like many things, sir.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I would invite you to visit the Ricardo website.

Ricardo Media is a Canadian company, which pays taxes in Canada. The company is of interest to 3.5 million Internet users. Why is it that the Canadian government has invested \$52 million in the Web giants for its advertising and does not advertise on the sites of our Canadian companies, which pay taxes, like Ricardo Media?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I've said it before, but I'll say it again: as far as media assistance is concerned, we're talking about more

than \$650 million. You're talking about \$50 million, but I'm talking about \$650 million.

Hon. Steven Blaney: They don't want subsidies, Mr. Minister.

They just want taxpayers' money to go to Canadian companies that pay taxes; 3.5 million Canadian Internet users visit the Ricardo website.

How is it that the Canadian government puts advertising on the platforms of the Web giants and not on the Ricardo site, or the Véro site?

Today is anti-bullying day.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: That's why I'm wearing a pink shirt today.

Hon. Steven Blaney: It suits you very well, Mr. Minister.

There are 800,000 women that could be reached through the magazine *Véro*. *Véro* is a company that pays taxes here, that pays taxes in Canada. How is it that the Canadian government is funnelling \$52 million of taxpayers' money to the Web giants, which are companies that pay no taxes here, or your salary for that matter. They could not pay for your shirt, because your salary is not paid out of the money of the Web giants.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: First, for these media, the government's share of advertising revenue is about 1%. I met with media representatives—

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Minister—

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Let me answer your question. If I can't answer, it's a useless exercise.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Please, Mr. Minister, but \$52 million isn't peanuts. It's small for the Web giants, but not for our Canadian companies.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Excuse me, Mr. Chair. May I answer Mr. Blaney's question?

Hon. Steven Blaney: You may continue, Mr. Guilbeault.

[English]

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): I have a point of order.

The Chair: We have a point of order.

Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: The minister hasn't been given an opportunity to answer. I hear Mr. Blaney repeating the same question but not actually allowing a chance for the answer. If we could please allow the minister...

The Chair: I'm not so sure that this is germane to the Standing Orders. However, I will say that the whole point of this is to extract information that we wish to acquire.

Mr. Blaney, judge yourself accordingly. With your experience, I'm sure you know how.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Minister, the floor is yours.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As I was saying, the government's purchase of advertising represents about 1% of that advertising envelope. Recently, I met with representatives of the press who had built their business model on the fact that they expected Google and Facebook to take about 60% of the advertising revenue and that they would be left with about 40%.

In fact, Google and Facebook have captured about 90% of advertising revenue. So you're talking about \$50 million, but it's \$650 million that we're investing in media. You're saying they don't want help. However, the very many media representatives I have met with do not say that at all, Mr. Blaney.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Minister, I'm asking you this afternoon—

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Blaney, your six minutes are up.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Okay.

The Chair: I'm sorry about that. As entertaining as—

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Be there for our Canadian companies, Mr. Minister.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Blaney, thank you very much, sir. You've been here quite a while. I think you know how the clock works.

Now we're going to the Liberals. We're going over to Madame Bessette, *s'il vous plaît*.

[Translation]

Mrs. Lyne Bessette (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank you for being with us this afternoon, Mr. Minister, Ms. Laurendeau and Mr. Piché. It's very kind.

I think my questions will be a little simpler than Mr. Blaney's.

I will deal with sport because it's something close to my heart.

I had the opportunity to read a small section in your mandate letter on sport.

In your mandate letter, you state that you are among the leaders in terms of preparing for the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games and future international sport competitions. What do you mean by that? Will you be a leader in the preparation of the Games or in the preparation of the athletes? What are your plans in this regard?

• (1610)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question, Mrs. Bessette.

First, the work we do in this area is in collaboration with the Canadian Olympic Committee and the many sports federations. That means several things. It certainly means setting up a program that allows our high-calibre athletes to excel on the international stage. Over the past few years, we have seen that, compared to not so long ago, Canada's podium results have been very encouraging. However, it means something else as well. There is a move—and I mentioned this earlier in my remarks—to try to make these events more and more environmentally responsible.

I recently met with representatives of the Canadian Olympic Committee in Montreal to talk about their efforts in this regard and to see how we in government can support them. I think the idea is not to do the work for them, but to support them and sustain them in the efforts they are making and will want to make in the coming years.

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Thank you.

I have a second question about the mandate letter.

There is talk of developing programs to increase youth participation in sports. A lot of sport and play time has been eliminated in schools. Do you think it would be possible to work with the education system so that we can bring more hours of sport back into schools? We are aware that education is a provincial government responsibility.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you say, education is a provincial jurisdiction. However, that does not prevent us from having conversations with our counterparts in the provinces and territories on these issues.

I recently met with Quebec's Minister of Education, who is also a former Olympic athlete, to discuss how we can encourage greater youth participation in sports.

In recent years, particularly through the infrastructure program, we have made significant investments in community sports infrastructure, for example, which does not therefore necessarily depend on schools.

I was pleased to go cycling at the velodrome in the beautiful riding of our colleague, Mr. van Koevorden. As a recreational cyclist, it was my first experience in a velodrome. This is the kind of investment we can make in partnership with the provinces and municipalities to ensure that young people have access to facilities where they can participate in sports.

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Perfect.

Thank you.

I still have a little time left, I think.

I have one last question regarding concussions.

I myself have fallen a number of times and suffered several fractures while cycling. I was lucky, though, because I was never diagnosed with a concussion.

You say that, in your mandate letter, you have a strategy to work with the Minister of Health to develop support for athletes who have suffered concussions. How do you plan to help these athletes?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: That is a very good question.

The subject concerns me as a minister, but also as a father. My 16-year-old son, who plays hockey, suffered a fairly severe concussion before the holidays. We followed a protocol for his return to the ice. My wish as minister, and Minister Hajdu's wish as well, is that, as soon as possible, we have in place the best protocols available in all sports federations so that every athlete who suffers a concussion will follow all the protocols before returning to their sport and will be truly ready to return to sport.

I am aware of the excellent work being done by the Institut national du sport du Québec, in Montreal, particularly when it comes to concussions. Our goal is to ensure that what happens there becomes a national standard.

• (1615)

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Perfect.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Champoux, you have six minutes.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all three of you, Mr. Minister, Ms. Laurendeau and Mr. Piché, for being here, for your availability and also for your offer to stay longer if we have further questions. That may well happen, because I have a rather long list of them.

I would like to start by coming back to your plan to improve regional media coverage. We talked about it earlier. The subject is music to my ears. The music doesn't always sound right, though, because of some quite disturbing realities.

You talked about the support you provide to print media, in particular, and you said that the various industry players you consulted say that the majority of them are very happy and very supportive of this idea. Now, very recently, we met with representatives of...

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: That is not exactly what I said.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Did you not say earlier that the media people you told about the assistance said they were pleased?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I said they disagreed with Mr. Blaney, who said we didn't need to help them and that we just had to remove the section 19 he was talking about.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Okay.

So, I withdraw that reference and I am informing you of meetings I had personally, a few days ago, with representatives of regional weeklies that are eligible for the assistance program you are proposing. Certain provisions of the program totally penalize them, and this is really an industry that is suffering enormously. The

weeklies are often the only media coverage that exists in many regions of Quebec and Canada.

Are you open to the idea of us doing a bit of a review of the criteria for this print media assistance program?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your question.

I am a big believer in local weeklies. When I was young, I delivered *Le Nouvelliste* for four years. I delivered the local weekly in La Tuque for many years. I wrote for several local media, including Transcontinental. Our government and I fundamentally believe that they are important.

This program is in its first year. We are quite willing to adjust the focus if we see the need to do so and if the program fails to meet the needs of the sector.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Perfect.

I already have the recommendations provided to me by the people in the industry, the representatives of those weeklies.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I think I got the same recommendations.

Mr. Martin Champoux: You very likely did. I am not the only one they sent them to, I feel.

Along the same lines, my colleague Mr. Blaney spoke earlier about the government's advertising investments in digital media in 2018-19. Personally, when that news came out last week, it stunned me. I could not believe my ears.

So, I called a friend of mine who is editor-in-chief for a regional weekly, and I asked him whether he had a lot of government-paid advertising and whether it made any difference to him. He told me that he had received \$0 in advertising investment from the government. The only advertising investment in those regional weeklies was made by Google Ads and other service providers. In fact, they buy from them what they do not manage to sell.

In short, don't you think that it might be a concrete way to help regional media if you invested directly with them in advertising, rather than creating assistance programs like the ones you need to create to assist them?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: That's a good question, Mr. Champoux, and I will be very honest with you. The government is facing a challenge when it comes to buying advertising. Obviously, we buy that advertising to reach an audience. The public is on the Internet more and more. As I was saying earlier to Mr. Blaney, we buy \$50 million in such ads.

Would the media prefer that we invest \$50 million in advertising and drop the \$650 million we put into the program we created?

Mr. Martin Champoux: Does one necessarily go without the other?

Maybe we could take \$50 million to invest in media and still support the industry with an assistance program? One does not preclude the other.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You must understand that it's a challenge for the government to reach people where they are. That is part of the challenge for government as it navigates through the murky waters of growing digital realities.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Are you aware that the unrest associated with all of this is mostly caused by the fact that these companies pay no taxes and give absolutely nothing back to Quebecers and Canadians? The unrest is quite widespread.

• (1620)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: That is going to change, obviously. We have committed to making them pay the GST. You have probably read, as I have, the statements by the Prime Minister, who said that the next budget would be a good time to do that.

As part of reforming the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, we made a very firm commitment to ensure that these giants contribute to Quebec and Canadian cultural content, and to what our friends on the review panel headed by Ms. Yale called discoverability, that is, the showcasing of that cultural content. So things are going to change.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I have one last question.

I would like to emphasize out another very harmonious note to my ear, and that is your plan to help museums. There are two museums in my riding. Drummondville's Village Québécois d'Antan is not a recognized museum because the houses, which are true ancestral homes, are not in their original location. Certain criteria in awarding museum accreditation penalize a number of museums, whose content and mission would otherwise make them worthy of consideration as such and of receiving the financial assistance that goes with that.

Are you open to looking at these eligibility criteria so that we can loosen the access requirements somewhat?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: First of all, if I gave the impression that we were going to help museums because we were not already doing so, let me correct that. In the 2018-19 budget, \$396 million was provided to Canada's museums and heritage industries.

Mr. Martin Champoux: That's right.

I am sorry to interrupt, but my time is almost up. I just want to clarify my question.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Champoux, I'm sorry. I have to cut it off right there; otherwise, I'd be giving you a bit of favour. I'm sure you'll have another turn at some point. Since the minister is generous with his time, it's quite possible.

Now, visiting us today, we have Monsieur Boulerice from the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. It's good to see you, sir.

[Translation]

You have six minutes.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to you, Minister, and to your colleagues for being here today to answer our questions. We appreciate it.

In 1999, the CRTC faced a dilemma. It wondered what to do about emerging digital media. It issued a broadcasting exemption order to exempt these media from licensing and regulatory requirements.

It is now 2020. We can all agree that it is not at all the same situation 21 years later, and that is quite clear in the Yale report as well. One clearly defined objective is that all players must participate in the system, that everyone must do their part to create Quebec or Canadian cultural content.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We are in agreement on that.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: I already knew we agreed on that.

There is something interesting in the Yale report. It says there is no need to wait for a review of the Broadcasting Act and that, right now, the government can modify the broadcasting exemption order so that digital broadcasters will immediately be required to contribute to our culture.

Are you prepared to do just that and review the current exemption order?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you very much, Mr. Boulerice. That is an excellent question.

We are currently looking at several possibilities or scenarios that will allow us to change the situation as quickly as possible.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Is any possibility quicker than that one?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: That is a good question. You are right to say it is a fast lane, but it is not an instant lane either.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: I understand.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You understand there is still a whole set of procedures to follow, but that is one of the options we are looking at.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: How long do you think it will take for these digital broadcasters to participate in our system? What is your game plan in terms of timeframes?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I have said it before and I will say it again. I intend to introduce legislation on this issue by June, or even sooner if possible. We are not in control of all the mechanics of the decision-making process on this issue. Nevertheless, I hope that by the end of the year we will have new mechanisms in place, but it is not up to me alone. We will need support, and I will be counting on you and your team.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Perfect, thank you.

Do you think these digital broadcasters, these Internet giants, should contribute through the Canada Media Fund?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You saw in Ms. Yale's report that there is a proposal to create one fund rather than several. These different funds are, in a way, representative of a time when things worked somewhat in silos, whereas now that is much less the case. It is one option. Will it be the Canada Media Fund, Telefilm Canada or a new fund, as recommended in the Yale report? We are looking at all of that right now.

• (1625)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: I hope that you will not consider creating private funds or funds that would be outside the regulatory framework, because then we would have fewer tools to ensure, for instance, a minimum amount of French-language content.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Honestly, this is the first time anyone has ever talked to me about that.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: I am happy to be in the vanguard.

I am going to go back to the Liberal Party's promises on tax fairness. Just now, Mr. Blaney brought up the issue.

You declared that you were going to force companies like Netflix to pay the GST, but that doesn't bring in a huge amount of revenue. It does not automatically bring in revenue for cultural creation or for creating Quebec and Canadian content.

Which measures are you going to take? Are you going to insist, to fight so that these Internet giants not only ask their customers to pay the GST, but also pay their own taxes in Canada?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: In terms of contributions to Quebec and Canadian cultural content, I am not sure that income tax is necessarily the way to go, because it goes into the consolidated funds. We can always go to see our colleague in finance to shed light on it for us.

In my opinion, it is much more useful for the arts and culture sector to arrange for them to contribute to one or other of the funds specifically designed for creating cultural content.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: As a representative of the people, do you not find it a bit of a shame that Simons in Montreal or Pratt & Whitney in Longueuil pay income tax, whereas Apple, Google or Facebook pay none in Canada?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you know, my colleague in finance is responsible for income tax matters. Clearly, he will be able to answer those questions much better than I can.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: I don't know why I sort of expected that answer.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Perhaps it's because I am not the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: We in the NDP have noticed that there is a kind of flaw in the Yale report. They are trying to include digital broadcasters and put them under the same umbrella or give them the same hat, so that they can contribute. The internet service providers, the ISPs, are conspicuous by their absence. It is as if they are not intended to be part of this.

Do you share our concern that those major players would not be contributing at all to the creation of content in our system?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The group of experts that Ms. Yale chaired is an independent group and it made recommendations to the government. We are currently examining those recommendations with our colleagues at the department. We are studying various aspects of the new system that we want to build. This is one recommendation among others, and it is one of the aspects we are examining.

[English]

The Chair: Now, we're going to go to Mr. Waugh, who is generously splitting his time with Mr. Shields.

I'm assuming you're starting.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Is it five minutes?

The Chair: It's three minutes, sir. Nice try. I like that, but I'm afraid you have three minutes.

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

Thank you, Minister, for being with us.

Do you agree with all 97 recommendations in the Yale report?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I think the real question is whether we're looking at them all and analyzing what each of them would mean in terms of the new system we want to build. That's what we're doing. It's not a question of liking or not liking, really. It's what—

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Your government commissioned this. You're looking at it. We had both co-chairs here on Monday.

I found number 26 interesting, indigenous ownership of broadband networks, when last week at the CRTC hearings, it was anything but bringing anyone in. The telcos wanted full control, whether they were Rogers, Bell, Telus or Shaw. How would you recommend number 26, indigenous ownership of broadband networks, to the committee here today?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I would invite you to ask my colleague Minister Bains that question, because this is not under the purview of my ministry.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you.

I find it kind of hypocritical. Your government, in the last four years, has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on social media, Facebook and such.

One of the points is:

Support local journalism and develop business models that facilitate private giving and philanthropic support for professional journalism and local news.

You have spent hundreds of millions of dollars outside of Canada, on Facebook, Twitter and so on, and at the same time you've thrown \$650 million to the media.

Also, we don't know which media got the \$650 million. The money that was spent by your government in the last budget, where you promised \$650 million to media, where did it go? Can you share one, two or three with us?

• (1630)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We could provide, with the department, a list of media organizations—

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Yes, could you and the amount, please?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: —that are receiving—

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Do you mean for publicity?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Yes, you gave out over \$595 million. That is what the number was.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: It was over five years. Yes, I remember that.

Mr. Jean-Stéphane Piché (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Cultural Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage): This amount is the estimated impact of the tax measures that were put in place—

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Stéphane Piché: —so there is no list of eligible organizations. That's going to be part of the tax process—

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Okay.

Mr. Jean-Stéphane Piché: —that will be managed by the Canada Revenue Agency in the first eligible year, which will be 2019 and then 2020.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Okay.

Mr. Jean-Stéphane Piché: This is an estimated value of the tax aspect, so this is not money given out.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Okay.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: If I may, that is one element of the assistance to media that we're providing.

The other is the \$50 million for local journalism. We will be able to provide you, at the end of the year, with a list of organizations that have received money, how much they have received and so on and so forth.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you, and the \$10 million also.

The Chair: Mr. Waugh, I'm going to have to cut you off there only because I made a slight mistake earlier. I want to apologize. I said “split time” and I used six minutes. It was actually the five-minute round, so—

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Are you going to shortchange someone?

The Chair: I was just going to say, God forbid I shortchange anybody, but Mr. Shields, I will give you an extra few seconds in there. You have about half a minute or so to do your questioning.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Thank you, I appreciate that.

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for being here, and I appreciate your staff, whom we have met before, being here. I think you have tremendous staff with you and I hope you listen to them because I think they're very good.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I do. You'll be happy to know I do.

Mr. Martin Shields: They have heard from me before.

Your staff will know, I have seven weeklies and no dailies in my riding, and there are two or three people—they're mom-and-pop operations—who don't qualify for a cent. They're not subscription based, so that rollout is killing the weeklies in my riding because they will be gone. They will be dropping dead. Your rollout kills all of the print media in my riding. I understand what you did with that rollout for the big ones. It kills my weeklies, every one of them, and it will. They're done. They're dropping.

We've been through that before. Your staff knows this. I've had the publications here.

In the broadcast and telecommunications report, there are words such as, “fair”, “reasonable”, “trusted”, “accurate” and “reliable”. I did wander through law school at one time, and I know what “legally liable” is. Police, when they are investigating something and there are witnesses, take statements from everybody they can get, because they know everybody's statement is different, and then they try to figure out, from all of those statements, what has happened.

Those words scare the hell out of me. They're subjective and they're in that report in a number of places.

What is your response to those kinds of words in that report?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I'm not sure I understand specifically what you're....

As I said earlier, this is an independent commission that was—

Mr. Martin Shields: You're looking at it, so you will see those words. What is your response to seeing adjectives that are very descriptive and very subjective?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As I said earlier, we are looking at every single recommendation that this independent body has made to us. The way forward for us is not something that will be by the Ministry of Heritage or by myself. We are working in collaboration with the Department of Justice as we move forward, so obviously anything we would be putting forward would have to pass the test of the law.

Mr. Martin Shields: Good, so those kinds of subjective words don't fit in the law. They're not there, so I hope that happens.

There is a recommendation—and this committee heard me speak about it last time—which says that the chair, vice-chair and the seven directors for the CRTC need to live in the national capital region.

That's inflammatory and it's against what I believe is Canadian unity. I hope you look very carefully at that one because that is a problem.

• (1635)

The Chair: Mr. Shields, I'm going to have to cut it off right there. I've been rather generous.

Mr. Martin Shields: Thank you.

The Chair: Minister, you can respond, if you wish, or I can just go to the next question.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Again, one of many recommendations....

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Housefather, you have five minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Minister, Ms. Laurendeau, Mr. Piché, it is a pleasure to welcome you to our committee.

In the last parliament, I had the pleasure of chairing the Committee on Justice and Human Rights. In that setting, we did a study on online hate. That study was requested by a number of groups, all over Canada, specifically in the Jewish, Muslim, and gay and lesbian communities. There were a number of groups in Quebec as well as in the other provinces. We considered the broad strokes of the problem.

[*English*]

When we were coming out with recommendations, we came out with recommendations on education, on defining hate online, and making sure that we applied definitions across the board so we could properly track online hate. We suggested certain civil remedies that might be restored to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

One of our recommendations has found its way into your mandate letter, Mr. Minister, which relates to regulating online platforms. Now because we were doing a large study, we did not come out with specific recommendations related to monitoring online platforms. We simply said that was one of the tools we needed to use to tackle online hate.

Of course, when I'm speaking of online hate, what I'm speaking of are all of the elements that are criminalized in Canada, whether it's hate speech, solicitation of children online, etc., to encourage providers, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google, etc., to take this down, take it offline.

Mr. Minister, I'm going to be proposing to the committee that we do a study on this issue. I am wondering, if this committee comes forward with serious recommendations, would you consider those recommendations when making the decision on how to proceed with the work that's given to you in your mandate letter? Maybe you could also share with us how you see this issue.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you very much, Mr. Housefather.

The question interests me greatly. I was very pleased to see that it was one of the points in my mandate letter. I was saying earlier, in my speech, that my last book dealt with the impacts of digital, both positive and negative. I have studied this issue a lot, and what other governments around the world have done to regulate digital platforms.

Some have the idea that we are going to create a new area of law and apply it to digital, whereas what we are looking to do is use the law that we already have and find tools to apply it online.

There are things that we do not tolerate in real life, but that we tolerate on the Web. We do not yet have the means and the tools we need to respond on the Web as we would in real life.

I hope sincerely that the committee will accept your proposal. We look very favourably on being able to take sustenance from your thoughts on the matter. I do not see why we should permit digital platforms to continue keeping illegal content online, such as hate speech, radicalization, incitement to violence, child exploitation or the creation of terrorist propaganda. It is unacceptable and, in Canada, we must give ourselves the tools we need to solve those problems.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I completely agree with you because, in Canada, there are limits to freedom of expression, and the courts have already established that those provisions in the Criminal Code are justifiable in Canada. Those things may go beyond the freedom of expression according to the Charter and the reasonable limits mentioned in its section 1.

I am very happy with your openness, Mr. Minister. I would like to ask another question.

On a number of committees, we do studies. When we do them, we want them to be independent and we also want them to be considered by the minister responsible when we have measures to propose. Some ministers are very good and some ministers are not so good.

When the committee does studies on online hate and other matters, will you be reasonable and really read what they contain? Will you try to consider the points that the committee has raised?

• (1640)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Let me say two things.

First, it is important to recall what we are trying to do with digital platforms. You talked about the whole matter of freedom of expression. Our courts have very well defined the fact that freedom of expression has reasonable limits in certain cases. What is true for freedom of expression here is just as true on digital platforms. Canada is not going to take over the controls of the Web, not at all, but the reasonable limits that apply in life must also apply on digital platforms. We believe in freedom of expression just as much as we believe in net neutrality.

Second, I can tell you already that the report on the review of the Copyright Act, which the committee submitted in the last parliament, is providing my department and my team with much food for thought.

I solemnly commit before you to give the recommendations that you provide to me all the consideration they deserve, on the regulation of platforms, or on any other subject that may appear important to you.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

We're scheduled for another 10 minutes, but here's what we'll do. We'll start with Ms. Shin. Then, we'll go back to Mr. Louis, and then we'll end with the Bloc and NDP. We'll close it out at that, okay?

You have five minutes, Ms. Shin.

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Okay, great.

Thank you, Minister Guilbeault, Ms. Laurendeau and Mr. Piché, for being here. I appreciate all the discourse that's been happening.

I would like to begin by creating a context. As a member of the Canadian heritage committee, one of the things I find joyful about this is that it's a unique opportunity to focus on the unity and patriotism of Canadians. I think that this dialogue and some of the things you mentioned are very critical.

On that note, I just want to make sure that, as a committee that's starting in the 43rd Parliament, we're starting with a clean slate. However, there is an issue that I find pending, especially today, talking about anti-bullying and some of the issues that Mr. Housefather brought up about free speech. It has to do with the fact that during the election, there was an issue with a lady named Manjot Bains. She responded to the media about the Prime Minister's photographs in blackface, but she felt that she had been wronged by being pressured to choose between the work she was doing on the Internet with her website as an advocate of anti-racism, and things like that.

I know it's something that you've, in a sense, inherited. You weren't part of that, but I would like to know how the minister would handle clearing the air on that. As a visible minority woman myself, some of the language, some of the descriptions used, like "gaslighting", are very serious psychological abuse. I've experienced racism in my life, and I still experience it even as an MP. Some people don't think I'm qualified because of my colour. I

would like to ask the minister how he would like to handle clearing the air on that. As a visible minority woman, it is pending for me.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question.

Our government fundamentally believes that all humans are equal. We fundamentally believe in the need to fight racism, for lack of a better word. We have done that from very early on, and we will continue to do it.

On the specific case you're referring to, I don't have the details. As you pointed out, I wasn't there. I would ask Madam Laurendeau to comment, if she wants to.

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Very briefly, you understand there are elements that are internal to management that we cannot comment on, but I want to reassure you that the department is committed to representation. We are hiring at a very high level people of all walks of life. It's very fundamental to the mandate of the department and we're committed to that.

I'm not in a position to comment on the specifics, but I really want to reassure you that all my management team is committed to employment equity and representation and to give all the space needed for all kinds of voices coming from all kinds of backgrounds.

• (1645)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: May I pick up on the first part of your intervention?

You used the words "focus on unity". I think the heritage ministry, the portfolio in general and the people who take part in it are uniquely positioned to help us work on unity all across the country—arts, culture, sports, the Olympics coming up—and I think maybe our country could use a bit of a unity boost these days.

I'm very honoured to be here—I said it earlier—but I want to be an advocate for the people who are doing all those amazing things and maybe contribute, in a way, to better national unity.

Ms. Nelly Shin: I appreciate your words. I understand what you're saying, and I believe we live in a country that does honour diversity. It doesn't matter what colour your skin is or even what your sexual orientation is; you all have equal opportunity. These are all very important parts of our heritage.

That happened, and I know you can't release the internal information, but what can you say or do? What I take away from it is that this lady was airing her grievance and was silenced. It's that idea of silencing, again, the issue of free speech.

I think this is a unique situation. What can you do, Monsieur Guilbeault, without breaking the confidentiality of the work that you have to do internally, to externally reinforce that you don't believe in silencing people when they're airing their grievances about racism or whatever it is? Just because it's the Prime Minister or whomever, for those who go through—

The Chair: Ms. Shin, I'm going to have to ask you to wrap it up very quickly.

Ms. Nelly Shin: For those of us who experience racism from time to time, to be silenced in our voices is very psychologically straining. I'd like to address that in seeing how the minister would resolve this issue, without disclosing the confidentiality of the internal works, but to reinforce our country's commitment.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Shin.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: May I respond?

The Chair: Please.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: It's obvious to everybody who's looked at me that I'm very white, but I have a sister who is originally from Haiti. I was made aware of racism and the impact of racism very early on as a child, as a brother of that sister. It's not just a political issue for me as the representative of the government or as a member of a political party. It's something that hits very close to home.

I give you my assurance that as a minister I will do everything that I can to ensure that we have a safe working environment in the heritage ministry. Again, I can't comment specifically on that. I don't know if—

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

I'm going to have to cut it off right there because I'm really pushing the limit. I'm being very generous to everybody, by the way. I'm not just being very specific. The genesis of that is when the minister said he was generous with his time, so I give him credit there.

Mr. Louis, you five minutes, please.

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Thank you very much for your time, Minister, Madame Laurendeau and Monsieur Piché. I appreciate it.

I also appreciate the fact that you talk about unity. I'm proud to be on the committee that represents so many sectors. I know we have a few athletes and a broadcaster, and I spoke to Ms. Shin the other day. She's a musician and I'm also a musician. We have a nice cross-section of arts and it's wonderful to see how we can work together.

I don't know, Mr. Shields, if there are other people representing. I'm sorry, I haven't met everyone yet.

Minister, you touched on something about reaching people where they are. As a musician, I'd love to make sure that our collective voice as a nation gets out. Not that long ago, radio and TV were the two ways of broadcasting, but the world is shrinking and it's opened up to everyone. That opportunity is there for so many artists and the challenges are there.

I wonder if you can comment on how Canada is opening up its digital platform and how we're getting our voices collectively out there with Canadian content getting out abroad.

• (1650)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for that question, Mr. Louis.

The government has undertaken a number of things in the last mandate that we intend to pursue.

The first thing I should talk about is the historic investment in the arts and culture sector. If they're not the most important, proportionally, of all the G7 countries, then those investments in the last mandate were amongst the highest in the sector on a per capita basis. The Canada Council for the Arts and a historic investment in the CBC....

We've launched a number of initiatives or provided increased funding to organizations in the arts and culture sector, and more specifically for music. I think about the additional \$20 million over two years that was provided to the Canada music fund.

Some of the elements that we have started doing around our cultural export strategy include the Frankfurt book show that will happen next fall. It's interesting to note that every year Frankfurt invites a country to be the host of the book show in Frankfurt. I was talking to someone, I believe from New Zealand—I think it was the last country to host that book show in Frankfurt—who told me that tourism went up 15% to 17% in New Zealand after they did that. The person I was talking to was clearly making a link between those.

Culture is obviously about more than money, but it's also about that. There's an intrinsic value to our arts and culture, but there is also a very important economic element for our country for getting our shows, music and books exported. We want people to discover them here, obviously. As you were pointing out in your question, in a world that is getting more and more global, it's also important to get our stories seen abroad, should they be in music, theatre or TV.

Mr. Tim Louis: I appreciate that. That's a good point. I don't know if this is a Canadian thing, but it seems that for artists, having some success abroad actually helps even domestically. It seems all the time you can't make it at home until you make it somewhere else.

My focus has been on music, but I want to ask about the film industry. We have a history of Canadian film and shows. Is there a way of getting the film industry out to the world as well through digital media?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Yes, absolutely.

One of the reasons we have committed to doing this review of the CRTC and to changing some of our laws is so we can continue telling our stories to ourselves and also be able to tell them to others. I, like many of you probably, have a subscription to Netflix, as I have to Ici Tou.tv, which is the Radio-Canada equivalent to Gem for CBC. I'm always amazed that we can have access to Norwegian or South Korean TV series, but I think some of our series are very popular. *Kim's Kitchen* is one of the most popular TV series in South Korea now. It's a CBC production. To give a French Canadian example, a Quebec artist, a comedian, just sold a series to Netflix, which aired on Radio-Canada, *Les pêcheurs*, which my kids love. I think it's the first TV series from Canada that has been bought by Netflix. There's a huge potential to get... We've had 50 co-production agreements in the last little while. It's about getting our stories out there, but also it's about making people here work and benefit from all this work.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that.

For clarification, I think it was *Kim's Convenience* you were....

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Yes, it's *Kim's Convenience*.

The Chair: I just wanted to make sure.

For the record, Netflix also owns *Frontier*, which was a show that was written, shot and produced in Newfoundland and Labrador. I have to put my own plug in there of course.

Speaking of which, we do have an array of talent around the table between a broadcaster and musicians and athletes. I'm a former TV weatherman myself. I was never an actual meteorologist. I played one on television. Now that that's on the record, my apologies.

• (1655)

Mr. Martin Shields: I'll never believe you now.

The Chair: Let's move on before it gets worse.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for three minutes.

Mr. Martin Champoux: You could have warned us that this storm was coming, Mr. Chair.

I would like to clarify the end of our discussion just now, when I was talking about the museum issue. Yes, I know that the Department of Canadian Heritage supports museums a lot and I perhaps misspoke when I talked about the Village Québécois d'Antan. I would like to emphasize that people from the department were a huge help to us in our endeavours. However, we were not eligible for accreditation as a museum institution. The criteria to obtain it need revision, we feel. That is what I wanted to clarify.

My colleague was talking to you just now about royalties and the cultural industry, particularly the cultural industry in Quebec. I have had the opportunity to gather a lot of information on this in recent weeks. The entire industry is suffocating. We know that digital platforms that pay inadequate royalties or none at all are a major concern.

In this report on the future of communications in Canada, we talk about the urgency of action on behalf of the cultural industry. This is where the urgency currently lies.

When, specifically, do you believe you will be in a position to put something in place to revise the royalty scheme and require that the Internet giants pay them?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You are actually bringing up a number of issues. For example, in the last five years, there has been a significant increase in revenue from the sale of online music, particularly in Quebec. The issue, of course, is that the artists, those who make that music, should be entitled to their fair share of that cake and that there should not be a whole lot of intermediaries between the artists and the Spotifys of the world, for example, who are nicely lining their pockets.

Online music sales are really increasing. So a part of the system is working, but another part is not working. That is one of the things that we want to review as we make this change.

As I said to Mr. Boulerice just now, it is my firm intention to introduce a bill by June and, ideally, well before that so that it can be passed before the end of the year.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I have very little time to debate such complex subjects.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You could invite me back.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Gladly.

I would like to talk to you once more about media coverage in the regions. One plan has come up, an idea that has been going around and gaining momentum for some time. It is to review the mandate of Télé-Québec so that it can have a newsroom.

Is that a foreseeable option, in your opinion, in order to improve regional coverage in the remote regions of Quebec?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The Government of Quebec is responsible for Télé-Québec, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Yes, but the decision lies with the CRTC.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: It is still a very good question. You have been able to see that, in my mandate letter, I have been asked to see how Radio-Canada could contribute more significantly to regional media coverage. You probably heard, as I did, the president of CBC/Radio-Canada, Ms. Tait, say that, in her opinion, the future of journalism is local journalism. Radio-Canada has already begun that process. The idea is not to impose our views on Radio-Canada, but to work in collaboration with the broadcaster to see how that objective can be achieved.

Let me tell you about the pilot project that Radio-Canada and the *Winnipeg Free Press* newspaper are doing in collaboration. In that pilot project, which is a first for Radio-Canada, stories coming from the *Winnipeg Free Press* are published on Radio-Canada's website, but only in part. If people want to see the story in full, they have to go to the *Winnipeg Free Press* site.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I am a subscriber. It works.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

[Translation]

Thank you very much.

Mr. Boulerice, you have the floor for three minutes.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There are a lot of things in your mandate letter, and some of them are very interesting.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You think so too, eh?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Yes. However—and this may be because I didn't read it properly—I saw nothing about the National Film Board, the NFB, which remains a jewel in the crown of Quebec and Canadian filmmaking. The Canada Council for the Arts has seen its funding increase substantially, with a five-year plan. By contrast, NFB's funding has been practically frozen for a number of years. I would like to know a little about your objectives and intentions with regard to the National Film Board.

Téléfilm is mentioned in your mandate letter.

• (1700)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You are right. In our election platform, we made a commitment to Téléfilm. The NFB's budget was increased, but that happened several years ago. Part of the increase was taken up by the move.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Practically all the increase was used to pay for the move. But we want the NFB to make films.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I have met with people from the NFB, and with officials from its union. We are very aware of the situation and, at the moment, I am working very hard for the NFB. Let's see what that produces in the near future.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: I would like to ask a question on another matter.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Ms. Laurendeau would like to add something.

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Although this was not specifically mentioned, when we get to work on the issues of broadcasting and the funding that will be reintroduced, the entire policy for the audiovisual area will probably be examined. That would include the NFB, Téléfilm, and other entities of that nature. It's not necessarily about reviewing their mandate, but it will be part of the things we re-examine, you might say.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: The interpretation of a provision in the Copyright Act is creating a problem. I believe it is section 12. It provides that Canadian publishers are not paid for their books when they are used in the education system, in colleges and universities. In Quebec, the interpretation is different and publishers are paid, whereas in the rest of Canada, there seems to be a problem. The situation is harming our Canadian publishers and authors.

Can you commit to reviewing that legislation so that the interpretation is no longer a problem?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As I am an author myself, the copyright issue affects me specifically and it is a subject that I know a lot about. If I recall correctly, the problem was identified in one of your committee's recommendations in the 42nd Parliament. You understand that I only have one hand on the steering wheel; the other hand belongs to my colleague Mr. Bains. It is a matter on which we have to work together, and we will do so.

The Chair: Thank you, everyone.

[English]

That concludes our hearing today.

I want to thank Madame Laurendeau, Monsieur Piché and also, of course, Minister Guilbeault.

Colleagues, we're going into committee business, which is in camera.

We're going to suspend for just a few minutes.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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