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Chair: The Honourable Hedy Fry





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• (1100)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC)):** I call the meeting to order this morning.

Welcome, everyone, to meeting 83 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. The committee is meeting today to study the main estimates 2023-24 and to have a briefing with the Minister of Canadian Heritage on his mandate letter.

Before we start, let's welcome Geneviève Desjardins, who will be our new clerk and is taking over from Mike.

We welcome Ms. Lantsman this morning. Thank you.

The rest of us are in place.

As you all know, the Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage, is appearing today.

Thank you, Minister, for joining us this morning. You've brought with you officials from the Department of Canadian Heritage to help out.

We have Isabelle Mondou, deputy minister. It's good to see you again

For Thomas Owen Ripley, associate assistant deputy minister for cultural affairs, the bike-riding should be good in Ottawa these days.

Last is Eric Doiron, chief financial officer. Eric, thank you for joining us.

Let's get started with opening remarks from the minister for 10 minutes.

The floor is yours, Minister.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the members of the committee for inviting me to talk about the priorities in my mandate letter and the Main Estimates for...

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** I raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Is it translation?

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** We don't have earpieces.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Are you okay, Mr. Champoux?

**Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Is his French so bad?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** We'll start at the beginning.

Go ahead.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to speak with you about priorities included in my mandate letter and the Main Estimates for the Department of Canadian Heritage.

As you said, Mr. Chair, with me today are Ms. Isabelle Mondou, Deputy Minister; Mr. Thomas Owen Ripley, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, whom you know very well; and Mr. Éric Doiron, Chief Financial Officer of my department, who will also be able to answer some of your questions.

I often say how proud I am to be the Minister of Canadian Heritage. In fact, I had asked to come back, but you know how it works. The Prime Minister could have said no. In the end, I came back because I think it's an extremely important department for Canada's social fabric. To be honest, it's not the easiest job in Ottawa. We have a very ambitious program, but I think we're all proud to contribute to promoting and defending our culture and who we are as Canadians. Our culture and all those who work in the sector deserve our support. I'm thinking of our artists, our creators, our independent producers, our museums, all those who work in the arts and culture sector.

All parliamentarians, my team, my department's officials and I all work extremely hard to implement all these priorities. Many have already been achieved and others are underway. Among other things, I'm talking about supporting our cultural industries, protecting the rights of our artists, encouraging the production of books and music, museums, theatres, homegrown programs and films. We must also support Indigenous people's efforts to revitalize their languages, promote their cultures and tell their stories in their own way. All Canadians need to see themselves in what they watch and listen to. We must protect our news media industry and make sure our laws reflect our digital world which, as you know, is undergoing profound changes.

• (1105)

[English]

My mandate letter, as you can see, contains many ambitious commitments, probably more than ever. There are definitely more than there were the first time I was Minister of Canadian Heritage. One of the most important, at least to me, but probably to a lot of you too, is to modernize our broadcasting system to make sure it reflects the reality of how the industry works today, because things have changed in the past quite a lot. We're doing this to make sure our industry succeeds. We want our people to succeed and we want to make sure that our artists and creators and producers have all the opportunities they deserve.

Over a year ago, I introduced our Online Streaming Act. Recently it received royal assent, and I think we should feel proud of that. We may not agree on everything, but I think it's a huge step.

It's been a long process. We all know that. We examined the bill; we debated it; we improved it. Even if it was tough, parliamentarians worked hard to make this bill into law. It's the law of the land. It's the first time it has changed since 1991, so I want to acknowledge the collaboration of parliamentarians, witnesses and all those who participated, including all of you.

[Translation]

The Online Streaming Act was the first success in a long series of actions we're going to take to level the playing field for everyone. When I say everyone, I'm talking as much about digital platforms as our broadcasters, newspapers and media outlets.

There's another step which I think is absolutely fundamental and unavoidable in this series of actions, and that's Bill C-18, the Online News Act. Access to reliable, quality news is the foundation of our democracy. It's one of the pillars of our democracy. The work of our journalists and newsrooms has value, and platforms must recognize and contribute to it. It's essential for democracy in our country.

Currently, a Senate committee is studying Bill C-18. I hope things will keep moving along smoothly. There were some good conversations and I think things are moving along well. Our news community needs it. As soon as the bill passes, it will help ensure the viability of our local and independent media.

Collectively, regardless of our party banner or where we come from, our job is to stand up for them, for a free, independent, non-partisan and professional press. Every single one of us must make

the effort, because Canadians expect us to protect local journalism and have independent, free, reliable and nonpartisan press. We must make this effort together.

Coming back to the rest of the mandate, we've accomplished a great deal. I'm thinking specifically of support we provided to artists and the cultural sector during the pandemic. It was at the top of my mandate letter. It all happened while we were in the middle of the pandemic. There were tremendous concerns in the sector. It was at the heart of our actions.

We supported the entire sector throughout the pandemic, but the sector was there for us too. I'm sure you'll agree with what I'm about to say. It was hard to be isolated, not to talk to each other, to be on our own. Imagine if we hadn't had books, music and television. It would have been a thousand times harder. While we were there for the cultural sector, it was there for all of us too.

• (1110)

[English]

I say it all the time. I just can't imagine a world without culture, languages, stories, TV shows, books, our museums and our music. I'm happy to see that because of the initiatives we put together through the pandemic, nine out of 10 recipients told us that our recovery fund helped them stay in business.

That's not all. Over a year ago—and you probably remember this—in May of last year, we held a national summit with cultural leaders from across the country, with people coming from everywhere. Hundreds of people came to talk here in Ottawa about the future of the sector. That was another very important moment. We met and reflected on the needs of the sector. Since then, we've seen our artists return to the stage, our venues fill up and our museums welcome visitors again. All of this is absolutely great to see.

Do you know what? The reality is that the credit goes to the cultural community, because they're the ones who did the job. We provided the funds and we had programs here and there, but they're the ones who worked hard to get back to prepandemic levels of activity.

We were there for them and we were committed to supporting the recovery all the way. A lot has been done, but you will definitely agree that a lot remains to be done also. There's so much work to do.

That brings me to the next topic that I'm here to talk about today, which is my department and portfolio budgets.

[Translation]

For the coming year, Main Estimates for the Department of Canadian Heritage will be \$1.9 billion. That includes \$202.9 million in operating expenditures and \$1.7 billion in grants and contributions. That's an adjustment of \$244.3 million compared to the previous year, simply because we're coming back to our pre-pandemic priorities.

[English]

A good example of that is our creative export strategy, which supports the competitiveness of our creative industries at the international level, and we just renewed it for three years.

There is also an increase of \$74.2 million in 2023-24 to support the efforts of indigenous communities to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen their languages. In the 2022 budget, money was also provided to foster a more inclusive arts training sector and to continue to support the postpandemic recovery of the arts sector.

It's important because it shows that we were there during the crisis, during the pandemic, that we're still there today, that we've been there for all Canadians and that we kept our promise to leave no one behind.

[Translation]

We will continue to be there.

Once again, thank you for your work, your dedication, your analyses and your reports. I'm here to work with you to see what we can do together to help the people we represent.

I'm now ready to take your questions.

Thank you very much.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you very much, Minister.

The first round will be a six-minute round. We'll start first with the Conservatives and Marilyn Gladu.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, and your department executives, for being here today.

Because of the work that's been done with Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, the CRTC is going to have a huge amount of work to do, but I notice in the estimates that they've not been given any additional money in this budget, and there are words there that suggest that additional money could be added.

Can you give us an idea of how much it will cost for the CRTC to fully implement the provisions of Bill C-11 and Bill C-18 when they get royal assent?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I agree with you that Bill C-11 and Bill C-18 are major steps and that the CRTC will be playing an important role.

I remember that we put in place an additional amount of, I think, \$1.9 million for the CRTC regarding Bill C-18. As for the

rest, we have to see exactly where we go in terms of regulations and the amount of work that's going to be done, but the CRTC will be fully funded for that, and they are confident that they can do the job on both bills.

• (1115)

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you.

Then we don't really know yet how much that will cost.

I remember, Minister, that the last time you were here, we were talking about the policy criteria that would be given to the CRTC to determine which content would be uploaded and which would be buried, and you said that we would see that policy directive or those criteria in due time.

Parliament has not seen those, but the CRTC has begun their consultations. I'm sure that they wouldn't be starting consultations without a direction. Have they been given a policy directive and criteria, and if so, can these be given to us? If not, why are they consulting without a directive? That would be the question.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No, they didn't receive it, Madam Gladu. We're finalizing the draft version of the policy direction, and it's a question of weeks. It shouldn't be very long.

Then, as you know, it will be sent for consultation, which is very important, and after the consultation we draft a final version that is sent to the CRTC. They will then adapt the work based on that, and they will go on with drafting the regulations and consulting and then finalizing the regulations. There will be a lot of regulations in the next steps, which is a good thing.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Certainly they need to have criteria. My concern is that before they've consulted and before they received a policy directive and criteria from the government, the CRTC is already considering decisions about whether or not they're going to allow the streaming of certain U.S. news outlets to Canadians. It was a concern of President Biden that perhaps Bill C-11 would result in something that would violate the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

What would you say to Canadians who are concerned that the CRTC may be already starting to talk about what things they can see and what things they can't see?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Ms. Gladu, with all due respect, the bill is not about what Canadians can see or not see. Bill C-11 is basically going to do two things: asking the streamers that we all love—Disney, Netflix and others—to contribute to the creation of Canadian content, and also to make sure that what we produce, which is great music and great films, is easier to find. It has nothing to do with our getting involved in the content. The CRTC has already said that they're not interested in the content.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** That's right, but they've put on the public record that they're considering not allowing a certain U.S. news organization to stream to Canada, so that is telling people what they can see and what they cannot see.

I know the Senate brought forward amendments to exclude individual user content from the bill, and the government rejected those amendments. The Senate also brought forward amendments to say that cabinet shouldn't be able to direct the CRTC on how they should screen or prioritize content that Canadians can see, and those were also rejected.

Can you explain to Canadians why you didn't exclude individual content and why you didn't take away the power for cabinet to direct the CRTC on what to bury?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** It's because Bill C-11 is already not about content.

For example, as users, none of us will see any difference. If you are producing stuff for the Internet, it's not about you; it's about the platform. Even if what you do is great—and we have some of the best content in the world—Bill C-11 only gives obligations to the platforms. There is not a single obligation to the content creators, and we made sure of that.

I'll be even more specific in my directive to make sure that it's really understood, but the bill already says it. It's only about the streamers contributing to our culture.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you, Minister.

Let's talk a little bit, then, about the Canada media fund. I see in the National Post today that there are diversity and inclusion quotas that are being put into the Canada media fund.

We did see from your government with the Canada summer jobs program that people who did not ascribe to the Liberal ideology and sign the attestation were not eligible for funding, so I worry when I see diversity and inclusion identity quotas.

Could you reassure Canadians that it's not going to be another attempt to make sure that people who don't ascribe to the government's ideology don't get funding?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We would never do that at all.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Well, Minister, to be fair, that was done under the Canada summer jobs program, and there were lawsuits. Redeemer University won their lawsuit against the government for being discriminated against under that program. People are concerned to make sure the Canadian media fund isn't going to discriminate against media organizations that perhaps don't line up with the government's ideology.

• (1120)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** The CMF is doing an amazing job helping the production of our content for television, for a lot of stuff, and this—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Minister, we're over time, so could you wrap up?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We're talking about \$40 million over two years, and this will support the creation of more French content

and make sure that some people whom we never have the chance to see will be seen a little bit more.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Marilyn.

We move to the Liberal Party and Tim Louis.

Tim, go ahead.

**Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate that.

Thank you, Minister, for being here.

To the other witnesses, thank you for being here. I appreciate your time, your energy and your efforts, especially throughout the pandemic.

The artists, the creators and the producers are the ones sharing our stories, and they're our stories. During the pandemic, Canadians turned to artists to make sense of what was happening in our lives and to connect.

Minister, if you don't mind, I would like to start by talking about how we're modernizing our broadcasting industry. We know that Canadian creators need support to continue to develop Canadian music and all forms of art in the world of streaming, like our film industry, our music industry and our stories, and Canada needs to continue to support those emerging creators. With the passing of Bill C-11, the Online Streaming Act, foreign-owned broadcasting companies will have to contribute financially to our cultural system, the same as our domestic broadcasters have been doing for years and years, so Bill C-11 is a big win for our Canadian artists and Canadian culture.

I was wondering if you could expand on what happens. How is that going to affect and help our art scene, now that the bill has passed? What difference will it make for our Canadian artists?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Bill C-11, I would say, is a major step, because that act had not been modernized since 1991. I always joke about it, saying that I had black hair at the time, but it was true. Also, if you look back, you'll remember that we would go to Blockbuster to rent movies. We didn't have Internet in our homes and we would listen to music on our Walkman. That was the last time the bill was modernized. Streamers didn't exist at the time.

We were working until recently with legislation that was drafted even before the existence of the Internet in our houses, before it was commonly used, so it was an important step, and there was a lot of work behind Bill C-11. You guys had it here for a long time, and it was in the Senate. I think it has a record for the bill that spent the most time in a committee in the Senate in the history of the country, so I think it's been well studied.

I think it's a beautiful compromise. Is it a perfect bill? No, but I think it's a beautiful compromise that is largely supported by the music industry, the film industry and the television industry. Why? It creates a level playing field, and it's going to ask the streamers that....

You know, I always say it, because we do love them. I do. This morning I was working out and I was watching *The Mandalorian* on Disney. I have Netflix. I have a lot of them, and they make a lot of money, which is good. I'm happy that they make money, but if they come here and they make that much money, they also have an obligation to play by the rules and support the creation of Canadian content.

In the same way that conversations were more difficult a couple of years ago, things have changed. The streamers understand that. You have not seen a lot of resistance recently from the streamers, because they get it. They're playing ball with the government, not only here but in other countries, so there will be more money for music, there will be more money for television and there will be more money for movie creation. I think that's great news for Canadians.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** Thank you very much for that answer.

Yes, you're talking about how these other companies from other countries have to play by the rules, and that's going to help to protect our culture, but the work is not done.

The legislation has passed. It's gone through the House and through the Senate and it's received royal assent. Now maybe you can explain what those next steps are, because there is that balance between legislation and regulation so that we don't have to continue to chase the technology that's moving so fast. Can you explain what the next steps are with where we are?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Absolutely. We touched on it a little bit with Ms. Gladu.

The next step is finalizing the draft version of the policy direction. That draft version is almost ready. It's going to be out very soon and going out for consultation. Canadians will be able to give their opinion. That's a very important step. We'll then prepare the final version, based on what we've heard, and send it to the CRTC, and they will start drafting their regulations based on the policy direction and other stuff they've been doing. They'll be consulting, and at the end of the day they'll be preparing the regulations, which will be implemented.

In the same way that there was a lot of consultation on Bill C-11, there will be a lot of consultation on what's coming after Bill C-11. I think it's good, because when we consult people, we get good ideas.

• (1125)

**Mr. Tim Louis:** I appreciate that. Thank you, Minister.

I believe that's my time.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Actually, Tim, you had another 35 seconds.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** I'll take it. I can do that.

I want to thank you. I've been working through this since it was Bill C-10. Coming up with ideas creatively from all sides of the House, all of the Senate and the House itself, and having contributions from the ministry have been very helpful. I look forward to being involved in the next steps.

There are three seconds left. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Okay. Thanks, Tim.

We move to the Bloc. Mr. Champoux, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

I'd like to start by welcoming Mr. Doiron. I have a friend with the same name, and he's been called Doyon or Dorion his whole life. Hello, Mr. Doiron. I also welcome Ms. Mondou and Mr. Ripley.

Minister, it's a pleasure to finally have you with us. We want to talk to you about many things, including bills we studied over the last two years, Bill C-11 and Bill C-18.

I also wanted to talk with you a little about the cultural industry's recovery. I imagine you're familiar with the committee's report on the industry's requests regarding recovery. Have you read it?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Of course.

Many players in the cultural sector, after the budget was tabled a few weeks ago, were extremely surprised and disappointed because they didn't find the expected response to their requests. I'd like to hear you on the subject. Have you heard the same thing from the cultural industry? Were there many cultural organizations dissatisfied with the amounts allocated to help them with recovery?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Some were happy and others weren't. You're absolutely right.

We're not even in the second year of the mandate, Mr. Champoux. We're trying to do as many things as possible, as quickly as possible. Among those who are happy, there are undoubtedly the national museums, who received significant funding. We also renewed funding for small festivals.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Indeed, funds were allocated to small festivals. However, they are the ones calling us the most right now, because their funding went down by 30%, which represents a huge amount of money. I'm not talking about festivals with budgets of 2 million, 3 million, 4 million or 6 million dollars, but festivals with small budgets under \$100,000 for organizing their event. The financial support offered to them went down by 30%. It represents a huge loss for these festivals. You said the government renewed grants for small festivals, but it's certainly not enough.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** The difference is that sums of money granted during the pandemic went down. We were always clear about being much more present during the pandemic. We granted hundreds of millions of dollars, which saved small festivals and bigger ones. Now, funding is coming back to what it was before the pandemic.

• (1130)

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Absolutely.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** It's also what we managed to renew.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Absolutely, but it was one of the recommendations as well. It was also one of the urgent requests, which was almost unanimous in the industry. The cultural industry asked to maintain the level of assistance granted during the pandemic, because it would need more time afterwards to recover. That's what I wanted to make you aware of, because many festivals or events may not happen, since they're unable to pay the artists.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm glad you brought it up, because I'm very sensitive to it and the same people reach out to me too. We've always been clear about the programs having a time limit. So, these aren't cuts. The programs ended on time, but keep in mind that considerable funds were allocated.

As for the music sector, I have high hopes that Bill C-11 will give it a big boost. When it comes to tourism, significant funds were allocated as well. It's also very possible that some of it...

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Big festivals are indeed relatively happy. It's the smaller festivals, the local festivals, that are suffering the most. They're going to reach out to you, because I told him to call you directly. You're certainly going to hear from them.

We talked about Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, which were both very important to me. I think we share the same vision of them, but I was still concerned throughout study of the bills, especially in the case of Bill C-11, by worries among those who still consider it a censorship bill. You and I both know that's absolutely not the case, but maybe it wasn't well explained. And maybe it was somewhat misused by some of our colleagues, who took advantage of the fear about a possible infringement on freedom of expression.

Now that Bill C-11 has passed and the CRTC will be looking into it, do you intend to respond to these people, to show more caution in order to reassure them about it? There's still work to do on that front, isn't there?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes, there's always work to do, but I think I had the opportunity to respond to these concerns throughout the debate, just like you and everyone else who supported the bill, as well as the entire cultural sector. The Canadian cultural sector, whether it be music, film or television, supported and continues to support Bill C-11.

I've said it, but I'll be even more clear about my directive. The CRTC was very clear on the fact that it's not at all interested in content. Even if some claimed it was going to look at content published online by Canadians, Mr. Champoux, how many millions of videos are posted every day? Even if the CRTC were interested in doing so, it would never be able to look at them all. In any case, it's not interested in doing that.

All we want to know is how much money these platforms get, so we can make sure they invest part of it in creating Canadian content.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** You talked about your directives. Late in the process, we became aware of official requests sent to you by the government of Quebec. One of those requests was to systematically consult Quebec when regulating Francophone culture and Quebecois media.

How will you respond to this rather specific request from the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I had good discussions with the Minister for Culture and communications, Mathieu Lacombe, who I think is doing excellent work.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** We both agree on that.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm glad to be able to work with him. Quebec was and will be consulted. Now, as for details and the directive, you'll have to wait a few weeks. It won't be very long.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Mr. Champoux. You are right on time.

We move to the New Democratic Party and Mr. Julian for six minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Thank you very much to the witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Rodriguez, on behalf of the committee, I offer our deepest condolences for your father's passing. I know that it's a very difficult time for you, and we are grateful to you for being available to still coming to the committee. Our thoughts are with you, as well as with your entire family.

I want to address the issue of online hate. We are seeing more and more cases of violence caused by the far right, which spreads hate against religious minorities, racialized people and the LGBTQ+ community. We see all this expression of hate online. Several years ago, the government promised to put forward bills to counter it.

Where are we at? When can we hope to see a bill to fight this epidemic?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you for the question, which is becoming more and more significant as events unfold. I also thank you for your words about my father, Mr. Julian.



The work is quite far along and will have the chance to tell you more very soon. I had the opportunity, with Mr. Bittle and other members, to consult members of different religious communities in every province and territory, as well as parents whose children took their own lives. I'll always remember my conversation with Amanda Todd's mother in British Columbia. I will always remember my conversations with parents whose children took their own lives because they were the victims of threats and sexual extortion.

You're right to say that it's a growing concern, especially because the people who spend the most time online, our children, are also the most vulnerable. There is an alarming number of not only teenagers, which is already very serious, but also 9-year or 10-year-old children taking their own lives.

We realize that online hate, as you know, Mr. Julian, doesn't stay online. It ends up on our streets. We saw it here and in Washington. We see it regularly. Online hate is real hate.

So, to answer your question, work on the bill will be done very soon.

• (1135)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** All right, but when is "very soon"? Will it be in two weeks? Will it be in the fall?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I can't tell you right now. It will not be any later than the fall, but I can't tell you when.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Okay. I'll come back to this question, because I also note in the estimates a decrease of nearly \$12 million for the community support, multiculturalism and anti-racism initiatives in your department. I mentioned earlier the increases in hate crimes provoked by the extreme right. In anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, there's a 67% increase; in crimes related to sexual orientation, there's a 64% increase; in race and ethnicity, there's a 6% increase. This is over the course of the last couple of years.

We see a decrease in funding at the same time that we see a marked increase in police-reported hate crime. I want to know how the government manages that contradiction in decreasing funding at a time when anti-racism initiatives are needed more than ever.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** On that note, I'll turn to Madame Mondou. I'm the one who created the anti-racism strategy the first time I was minister, but that is not under me anymore. That is under Minister Hussen.

I'll turn to Madame Mondou, because she knows that file very well.

**Ms. Isabelle Mondou (Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage):** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the question.

You're right that there was a decrease, but there was money in budget 2023 to support these efforts. As you may know, an anti-racism strategy has been developed. There is now an anti-hate strategy that the minister is planning to launch, probably in the fall. All of those are coming with additional money.

That drop in funding is temporary, because more money came in budget 2023, and we hope additional money will come also in the context of those two other initiatives.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you for your comments. I would stress that at a time when we're seeing increased hate from the extreme right, there is no doubt that funding is needed more than ever. These initiatives are needed more than ever.

I'm going to turn now to CBC/Radio-Canada.

[Translation]

The mandate suggested that more money and resources be given to CBC/Radio-Canada. It's an important institution across the country.

[English]

With regard to funding for the CBC, do you have a sense when the funds to reduce CBC/Radio-Canada's reliance on advertising revenue would be provided? How do you see CBC/Radio-Canada, a vitally important cultural institution for our country, moving forward?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** You're absolutely right that CBC plays a fundamental role in our country, with a very specific mandate to support minority-language communities, to be present in regions and to help us understand what's going on in the world. As you know, in my mandate letter one thing that I have to do and that I'm starting now is the review, *la révision*, of the CBC/Radio-Canada mandate. That will be ongoing. Then we will be analyzing all that at the same time.

Remember that CBC, like other institutions, will also benefit from Bill C-18 eventually, so there's something there.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr. Julian.

We'll move to the second round. It's a five-minute round.

We will start with Melissa Lantsman for the Conservatives.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Thank you.

Thanks to our witnesses for coming, and welcome, Minister.

I want to go back to what my colleague was talking about on Bill C-11, and particularly with regard to the CRTC consultation. It says that they are going to consult on what constitutes a "social media service". Can you define what constitutes a social media service?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Do you mean what the platforms are?

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Yes.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Platforms are there, on the Internet, used by Canadians and people all over the world.

• (1140)

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Yes. If it was so easy for you to define that, why is the CRTC consulting? Why isn't it in the bill?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Oh, as to why they're doing that, you'll have to ask the CRTC. They're independent. What I'm going to do very soon is send a set of directives. They're going to be consulting. I'll be consulting on that and then sending them the final version. They'll be consulting on their own.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** There is no doubt going to be a discussion about whether aspects of certain social media services would be covered by the Online Streaming Act. Why not put the definition right in the bill, or why not accept clause 4 to keep user-generated content out of the legislation? Why not just accept those regulations?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Ms. Lantsman, it is out of the scope of the bill. There will be more precision in my policy directive.

Once again, a lot of people said this will affect user-generated content, but there's no obligation on them. The obligations are only on the platforms. It's about the platforms, not the users or the creators.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** If you're certain about that, why not include it in legislation, not in regulation, to give people certainty that it won't be included? This is not coming just from this committee, but from a wide array of creators who are concerned about the very same thing.

You have that amendment from the Senate. Why not include it, unless there's another agenda?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's where your party and ours disagree. We think that with the bill as is, it is excluded. It's totally excluded. We said, and the CRTC said, that there is no interest in the content, even if the content is great. However, imagine, as I said, the millions of videos uploaded every day. Who would be watching them if they were interested in the content? No one could, even if they were interested, but they're not.

The only thing we need to know is what the revenues are, so that based on that, we can say, "Okay, this platform and that platform have to contribute a certain percentage or amount to the creation of Canadian culture."

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** In the way you defined it, though, the user platforms, such as YouTube or Facebook, along with their content, are included. In your understanding—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** You claim that the user content on these outlets somehow won't be impacted by Bill C-11. That's the claim you're making. How do you square that circle?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I don't see Facebook included in this. YouTube could be, because sometimes people upload the exact same thing you would get on Spotify, for example—the same song. If it's treated one way on Spotify, it should be treated the same way on YouTube. That's it.

As for the rest, I don't think that's [*Inaudible—Editor*].

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** You can understand why this is confusing. Again, why not include it in the bill?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** The bill is clear. The bill excludes them. We've had this discussion for over a year now—

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** It's clear as mud.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We respectfully disagree on that.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** It's not really a disagreement; it's just that it's not clear.

Minister, I want to go back to the case of Laith Marouf. That's the consultant who got at least \$133,000 from the ministry, and it took over a month to do anything about it or, frankly, to get acknowledgement from your office.

I want to know whether that \$133,000 has been paid back.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Again, I'll turn to Madame Mondou. This was under me the first time, when I was Minister of Canadian Heritage and multiculturalism, but I'm not the minister for multiculturalism anymore. It's Mr. Hussen, so I'll turn to Madame Mondou.

**Ms. Isabelle Mondou:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are in a recovery process. We are using two avenues. The first one is a recovery agency, and the other one is the CRA.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** It still hasn't been paid back.

**Ms. Isabelle Mondou:** No.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Has anybody faced consequences for hiring Laith Marouf? Has anybody been fired?

In a regular job, in a regular place, if you do something like that, there are consequences. Has anybody at all in the ministry faced consequences for the vile anti-Semitism in funding Laith Marouf?

• (1145)

**Ms. Isabelle Mondou:** Just to be clear, he was not hired by the department; the organization that hired him was receiving funding from the department. He was not hired by the department.

I think my colleague Mala was here and explained that a lot of measures have been put in place to try to avoid that kind of event in the future, including better screening and monitoring. People have also been provided with training.

I have to say, in all honesty, that we are producing, as I think the minister was saying, \$1.7 billion a year in grants and contributions. We have a lot of employees who are very devoted to their work, and they do their best.

Having said that, I am personally sorry for what happened. I can tell you that everybody in the department is extremely sorry about it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Ms. Mondou. Thank you, Ms. Lantsman. We'll move to the Liberal Party.

Michael Coteau is online. Welcome, Michael.

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity.

Minister, thank you so much for being here today and for joining our committee.

I've been on this committee and obviously in the House. I've heard politicians talk about cutting funding to Radio-Canada and cutting funding to public television. I grew up watching a lot of TV shows on public television. In Ontario, we have TVOntario, which we hold in high regard in our province as well. I think public television is a good thing for Ontarians and for Canadians.

In regard to the rhetoric around cutting funding, as the minister responsible for heritage in Canada, when you hear these things, what does that mean to you?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I think it's very sad because of the importance of our public broadcaster.

CBC/Radio-Canada played and is still playing a fundamental role in our country in the same way that the BBC and others do in other countries. It has a clear mandate to support language minorities across the country—francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec. We see the coverage and quality of what they do internationally and how they've helped Canadians understand the world throughout decades. It has among the best information there is when things happen outside the borders of our country.

My first reaction is to say that it's very sad.

The second reaction is that I'm not sure they understand what they're saying, because CBC/Radio-Canada is one. It has the same president, the same work, the same structure, the same head office, the same offices. The same cameras are used. The same microphones are used. The same "anything rooms" are used. Quite often the same journalists are used.

Quite often I will give an interview in French, and then the journalists will switch and ask me the same questions in English, or the opposite if they start in English. When do you stop paying that person? If that same journalist is asking you a question in French and then switches to English, do you stop paying the salary of that person because you say, "No, in English you're not going to be paid. We're not going to support you"?

It doesn't make any sense, because CBC also has to respect the law on official languages.

The opposition is also sending the message to the anglophone minority in Quebec that we don't care about them. Francophones outside of Quebec can have the services of Radio-Canada, but anglophones in Quebec will not have access to CBC, which comes to the same sentiment that I had at the beginning. I find it very sad.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you very much, Minister.

Continuing on that thread around diversity and the vast regions of this great country, we have so many different communities that make up Canada. What is your department doing to ensure that our programs and services are connecting and supporting all communities across this country, with an emphasis on indigenous and also racialized minorities in this country? Can you comment on some of the strategies and programs that you've put in place to ensure that there's a balance out there?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Absolutely. We do it in different ways.

For example, for indigenous people, one of the things I'm most proud of is that when I was heritage minister the first time, we put in place Bill C-91 on indigenous languages. That passed and became reality. Now the office is in place and we are supporting it, and we now have bills with the three NIOs, the national indigenous organizations for the Métis, the first nations and the Inuit, to support them in their efforts, in some cases simply to have their language survive.

This will help us not only to teach the language but also to have more music, more television and more films for indigenous people. This will help young indigenous people to be prouder of who they are, because they will see themselves in all of those productions. It is the same for racialized people. Bill C-11, for example, is asking for some of the contribution, the money we're getting, to go to racialized, indigenous and different under-represented groups. Why? It's because it's the right thing to do.

• (1150)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Michael, your time is up.

Thank you, Michael. Thank you, Minister.

We'll move now to the Bloc for two and a half minutes. Mr. Champoux, you are up again.

[*Translation*]

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

Minister, I'd like your opinion on the attitude that has been shown here by representatives of Google and Meta regarding Bill C-18 during recent meetings we've had at this committee with these people.

How did you react to their threats? How do you intend to respond?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I probably reacted the same way you did, Mr. Champoux.

I think most of us agree that there are actions taken that are unacceptable and also demonstrate a great deal of arrogance. Just because they're big and rich doesn't give them the right to come here and intimidate us and tell the Government of Canada, the opposition or whoever is elected, or even the Senate, what to do with our democracy and our laws.

I find it deeply disturbing to see Google take away news access from a portion of Canadians. We'll see what happens next. It's a business decision they'll make, but both companies make a lot of money here in Canada. To me, such actions are a threat to our democracy.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Do you get the impression that, if Meta or Google make good on their threats, this lack of possible funding for our media could hurt? Do you get the impression that this makes smaller media, such as weeklies, which are already very much in peril, even more vulnerable?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes, this could be an additional challenge. We need to make that clear. Currently, the way to access news is to click on links and be directed to one news site or another.

I remain convinced, however, that we can find a way to collaborate. You know, Canada isn't the only country to have highlighted this issue. Australia has preceded us in taking action. The Americans on both sides of the House are currently discussing it, as are France, England and Europe.

So we're going to have to find a way to work with these web giants, but I'm not going to accept any threats under any circumstances.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** There's something that often comes up when you talk to small media that don't belong to big groups. They have difficulty making a good digital transition. They don't have the means to make a digital transition that allows them to compete in this changing world. They're used to printing newspapers. It's not the same thing.

Does the government intend to help them make a good digital transition? Couldn't you help them become a little more efficient in this regard?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's a very good question. It's something we're considering.

There are many examples of excellent media that didn't make that transition or couldn't make it fast enough. Unfortunately, they ceased to exist.

However, we put forward a host of programs, the first time I was Minister of Canadian Heritage. I'm very proud, for example, of the \$600 million for media newsroom payroll. There's also the \$50 million for regional media. These are ways of helping them.

As you say, Mr. Champoux, we always have to look at other ways to help them.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Thank you.

I think my time is up.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** You owe me.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** For two and a half minutes, we go to Mr. Julian of the New Democratic Party.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. We all owe you.

I want to reiterate the importance that the money is being reclaimed in the Laith Marouf case, though I do believe, given that there are members of the Conservative caucus who met with a vile anti-Semitic and Islamophobic neo-Nazi, that it's a bit rich for the Conservatives to give any lessons around anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

That said, I wanted to come to the issue of copyright.

A number of organizations are looking to update the Copyright Act. It is a little unclear who is taking that one and it is a little unclear what the timelines are. Can you update us on this badly needed update to the Copyright Act and how much of it is on your desk and how much is on other ministers' desks?

• (1155)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's a great question, Mr. Julian.

I had the opportunity to be the critic of this same portfolio when I was in opposition for a couple of years, and at that moment we were updating the Copyright Act. There were always discussions between the industry department and Canadian Heritage on the side of the government, and on my side, on the opposition—I'm sure that you have this type of discussion—it was me and Mr. Garneau, who I think was the industry critic at the time. We're both involved. In what percentage, it's hard to say. We have to come to agreements, but it's clear that we have to move and that it's very important.

It's always complicated to move forward on that bill, but it's a priority for us and it's something we want to move forward.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Is this something else we're expecting in the fall? Is it funding for the CBC, online harms, and this? Are all these things...?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Mr. Julian, we're not even in the second year. It's been a year and a half or something, and we've done a lot. The other stuff is coming, including copyright and online hate.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Can I ask you when?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I don't have a date.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Is it this year?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I can't tell you, no.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Well, we will certainly—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** It's as soon as possible.

When it only depends on me, it's easier. When it depends on the discussions you have to have with other departments and ministers, you don't control everything. That's why I cannot give you a more precise answer.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Okay. Thank you.

I wrote to you just a few days ago about CACTUS, the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations, and the funding issue they have around the local journalism initiative. They're experiencing a lot of complications. This is important, as Bill C-18, as you pointed out, is to incite and encourage local journalism.

Do you have an update on responding to the needs of these local organizations that are just trying to put in place local journalism initiatives?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** There are two things there to support them with Bill C-18. That's hopefully coming soon, depending on what's going on in the Senate. I also mentioned the special fund with \$50 million of support.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I owe you as well, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** That's fine.

We'll now move to five minutes with the Conservatives and Mr. Shields.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Minister and officials, for being here today.

You made the comment about Meta, and those are the big rich guys. We've talked about the federal government's advertising before. It cost \$24 million in 2019-20, and it went to the big rich guys. Then it went up to \$51 million, and it headed for \$64 million in 2021-22. That's the advertising this government did on international platforms outside of this country. A bit of that is that you gave them money and then wanted to take some back.

However, the media-independent non-daily papers in my region, say they used to get 30% of their revenue from federal government funding. Now they get virtually zero. Why do you favour the big international platforms and send money out of the country when you could be supporting advertising in our own country? It would not be a subsidy, but advertising.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** You're raising a very good point. There are different programs for those papers. They play a fundamental role, Mr. Shields, as you'll agree.

Why do we have Bill C-18? It's because those papers are disappearing. Over 460 media—big and small, in regions and cities or whatever—have disappeared in the last 10 to 15 years.

All of the money is migrating to those big players, and we're trying to come back to a fairer system. The government has no say; we're just putting in place a table in the middle. We're having the tech giants with all of the players, including the small ones like yours, come to the table and negotiate collectively.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** It's zero, thank you.

• (1200)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** But the bill is not in place.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** No, no. They're getting zero now.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's why we have to pass the bill.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** It's the funding from the advertising. The advertising dollars are gone. You've decided to give it to the international big rich guys rather than advertise in our own local media. It's gone. You've made a decision as a federal government to advertise with the big rich guys instead of advertising in our non-daily papers. It's gone.

The non-daily papers say, "Put the advertising back where you used to spend your money instead of sending it out of the country to the big rich guys", the ones that you identified.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Well, yes. We have to look at the possibilities of providing more support to those small players, but also, as I said, there are programs they can access.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** No. It's not subsidies. They don't want subsidies.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** They're programs. It's not a subsidy in the sense of a subsidy—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Yes, it's a subsidy. When you provide a program and you don't advertise, it's a subsidy.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** There are different programs to support them. That's because their work is extremely important.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I agree. It's really critical. I have about 13, and most of them in my riding are independent—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** They're fundamental, and they're disappearing—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** They're not represented by anybody. They got zero out of whatever funds. It's not coming out of the \$600 million. They got zero out of that \$600 million. It's a big zero. Nothing. Those 13 got nothing.

The big tech guys haven't contacted them to give them any money out of the \$300 million either. They admitted that here, and I've contacted them—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** The \$600 million is not available for the big tech companies. This is only for our regular—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** The 13 weekly papers in my riding got zero. Do you understand? It was zero. They didn't get it, so who got it? Who got the \$600 million?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Those programs are not accessible to the big tech giants. They're not for them.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Who got it? Who got that \$600 million?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** It was different media across the country, newsrooms—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** No, no, not mine, not the 13 weekly, non-daily papers.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I understand, Mr. Shields. It wasn't yours, but think about the media, big or small, in different regions—radio, television and papers. They are getting some money through those programs.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** No.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** They are.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** No. You don't understand. They're not getting it.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** You're telling me that your 13 papers are not getting it. I fully understand that.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** No. They're independent. They don't belong to groups. They're not getting it.

That's what you fundamentally have missed, time and time again over the years. You don't get it, and that's why they're going down.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Mr. Shields, the \$600 million is going to local media.

One of the benefits of Bill C-18 is collective bargaining. You can have a lot of them, even if they are not represented by anyone, get together. That is what they have done in Australia, and the small media in Australia, proportionally, got more than the big ones, proportionally speaking.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Most of that money, the \$300 million, has already been negotiated away. We heard from your officials that 75% to 80% is already gone. It's already been negotiated away.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm sorry, but I don't know what the \$300 million....

*A voice: [Inaudible—Editor]*

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Oh, it's Bill C-18.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** It's already gone. It's already been negotiated.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No. The bill has not even passed.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** It's already been negotiated.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Your officials have told us that.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No, no.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Your officials sitting here have told us that.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** In committee, they have told us that.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Very quickly, Mr. Ripley, if you don't mind, could you...?

**Mr. Thomas Owen Ripley (Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Cultural Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Shields, I believe you're likely referencing the fact that there are existing agreements in place, and Bill C-18 does provide a transition mechanism for those agreements to be taken into account.

However, once Bill C-18 receives royal assent, the CRTC will have to assess whether platforms have done enough against the criteria set out in the bill and assess whether those existing agreements are sufficient or not. The government's perspective would be that right now the agreements are probably disproportionately with the bigger players. As you note, more needs to be done to support the smaller players.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** And it's going to include the smaller—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Okay, we're going to move on.

Thank you, Mr. Shields.

We'll move to Lisa Hefner and the Liberal Party for five minutes.

**Ms. Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister and our other guests, for being here today.

Minister, just a couple of days ago I was at the sold-out fundraiser for the Art Gallery of Hamilton, which I'm sure you know is one

of the biggest and best art galleries in all of the country. People were lined up down the street, dying to get in once they reopened during the pandemic.

I also recently visited a couple of TV shows that are being filmed in Hamilton. That's an industry that didn't shut down at all during the pandemic. All are very grateful for the supports from your department. I have also met with people who put on local festivals in Hamilton, who are also grateful for supports.

However, not everybody has recovered entirely from the pandemic. It's still difficult. Crowds have changed. People don't plan anymore. They don't buy their tickets to an event until the very last minute. It's very hard for music producers, for example, to know how many people or how much they can pay to put on their event. Everything has changed.

Could you reflect on that for us a little?

You mentioned that one of the first things you did in this session as minister was to hold a national seminar on the arts, culture and heritage. Tell us what you've heard from artists lately. What does the future of the arts look like in Canada?

● (1205)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's a big question. I'm not sure any of us has the full answer to that. We understand there are many challenges.

One of the things we got out of that summit.... It was a huge success, by the way. We had 400 people from all over the country, and hundreds of people were on the screen. A big topic of discussion and debate was the fragility of many of our workers. The arts and culture sector was one of the hardest hit during the pandemic, especially the live arts.

If you think about it, you had venues and maybe you had a gig where you would play the guitar. Let's say Mr. Louis had a gig, and he was playing at a certain venue. The venue would say, "No, sorry; there are COVID rules. You're not playing." The COVID rules then changed, and then it was, "Oh, by the way, yes, you can play next week." The rules kept changing. We lost many people because these people who had contracts here and there were also parents. They also had to pay the mortgage or the rent, put food on the table, clothe their kids and all of that. Because of that instability, we lost many people.

We have to look at ways to offer more stability to that sector. Can we do stuff, for example, through EI? How can we also help the venues to encourage people to come back? We've put in place some of those programs. For a while, people were still concerned about COVID and going into a room full of people. People are a bit more reassured now, but not fully. It brings supplementary challenges, so you discuss live events and the future of television and movies at the same time. The way to approach this is to have an inclusive approach.

We have programs with the live sector. We have Bill C-11 for our culture sector. We have Bill C-18 for media and newsrooms. The most important thing is to listen and to learn from the people on the ground. I'm only the minister, right? We have some tools as a department, and some money, and definitely goodwill to change and help, but the people who know are the people doing the stuff on the ground.

**Ms. Lisa Hefner:** Very good.

As you know, I'm a former broadcast journalist and I have spoken to many stakeholders about Bill C-18. I was very honoured to play a big role in helping shape the legislation and work on that legislation here at this committee. The Canadian Association of Broadcasters were here on the Hill a couple of weeks ago, and all I'm hearing now from stakeholders is, "Thank you for getting Bill C-18 through the House. When will it take effect?"

Please tell us about the next steps for Bill C-18. We know it's at the Senate right now. Is there a date we can expect it to actually take effect?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Part of the answer is in the hands of our friends at the Conservative Party, because it depends on what they do. Last time they took a lot of time. They wanted to really reflect on Bill C-11. I think they did that. Now they want to really reflect on Bill C-18.

In a way, Bill C-18 is a game-changer for our independent media and newsrooms. As I've said before, please keep reflecting on the importance of an independent press, a free press, a non-partisan press, in all different forms, for fighting disinformation, informing Canadians and searching for the truth.

These people are professionals who have devoted all their lives to this, but now the money has now gone to the big techs, and we have to find something that is fairer for the system.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Lisa.

We'll go to Ms. Gladu for five minutes.

We've started the third round. We'll probably also have time for a fourth round.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you, Chair.

First of all, Minister, I'm very surprised to hear you did not follow Chrystia Freeland's advice and cancel your Disney subscription to help balance your household budget. I also did not take her advice, because I too like *The Mandalorian*.

I want to move along and talk about a couple of things.

There is a lot of stuff going on at the National Gallery. Fourteen people have been dismissed. There's talk it can't fulfill its mandate. People are upset about a \$300,000 contract for an outside consultant.

Can you tell us what is happening at the National Gallery? What is your office doing to bring that to a resolution?

• (1210)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** As you did, I followed that situation very closely, because it's a very important institution. It's a place I

always loved to go all my life. When I was growing up, I would come from Montreal or Sherbrooke to visit the gallery.

I don't manage what's going on at the gallery internally, but I do make nominations. We're about to name the person who will lead the gallery very soon. The announcement is coming in the next few weeks, and we hope it will stabilize the institution.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Very good. Thank you.

Your mandate letter also mentions that you need to do work to support faith-based communities across the country. We have seen more than 68 Christian churches burned to the ground, vandalized or desecrated here in Canada, as well as many Jewish synagogues, some mosques and other religious places of worship.

I would be interested to know what actions you have taken as part of your mandate to ensure that people can freely worship, whatever their denomination.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I think that's very important, but it's not in my mandate letter, Ms. Gladu.

Maybe if I turn to Madame Mondou....

**Ms. Isabelle Mondou:** Mr. Chair, I think the reference is to the program that Public Safety Canada has to help support those communities to stay safe and help those places be secure.

You probably saw in budget 2023 that this program was approved, so there is going to be more money for people to be able to protect their communities, protect the faith-based institutions. It's our colleagues at Public Safety who are doing that important work.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** It was in the 2022 mandate letter for the minister that I was looking at. It said that part of supporting the preservation of culture was faith-based community, so I wondered what activities were going on in that respect.

**Ms. Isabelle Mondou:** We can follow up. We're not quite sure, but I can follow up.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** If there are things, please forward them to the committee.

Let's turn to the different museums. We have the Museum of History, the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, the Museum of Nature and the Canada Science and Technology Museum. If we look at the estimates, we can see that the funding has not increased; in fact, it has decreased for many. They are concerned about their ability to continue to operate.

I wondered what the government is doing, what the minister is doing, to help these organizations move to become financially self-sustainable, ultimately.

These are great places to go. There are business models out there that would say they should be able to sustain themselves. We certainly don't want to lose them, so I'd be interested if the minister could comment about that.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you for raising the importance of those museums. You're absolutely right. Whenever I get the chance, I like to go to Winnipeg to the human rights museum or to Pier 21, and I'm sure you guys do the same.

I can say that for the first time in a very long time, we increased the budget. There was an increase of \$53 million in the last budget. Mr. Doiron, maybe you'd like to give more details about it.

I think some very good news in that last budget was that \$53 million, because for years and years those important institutions have not received supplementary funding, but now they do.

I don't know if there's anything to add to that.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** There's one other thing that I want to know.

When we had Meta and Google here, talking about they would react if Bill C-11 in its current form passed, they indicated they would likely block the ability to stream news.

I know that Australia had discussions with them when they were going through their legislation. Have you had similar discussions to come to some resolution so that Canadians don't lose their access through Meta and Google?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I think you're referring to Bill C-18, Madam Gladu.

We've had many discussions. Those who know me know that my door is always open. A lot of them have my cellphone. I'm always ready to discuss with them, with their representatives. My team and our public servants have been discussing with them all the time, and my door is still open.

I don't like this impression of confrontation. We may disagree on stuff, but there is still a lot of stuff we can do together. My door is still open to see if we can discuss.

• (1215)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Ms. Gladu.

We'll move to the Liberal Party and Tim Louis for five minutes.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate another chance to talk again.

Minister, you mentioned the idea in the mandate of holding a national summit of the arts, culture and heritage. You did that, and I was very appreciative. It was a few months ago, and I was very glad to be part of it. It was very important. It was a very powerful and constructive debate that we had on arts in general, talking about how arts are a mirror for social change and bring the whole cultural industry together, artists or creators. That was a very important and timely thing. I really appreciated that.

We had lots of new ideas. There was innovation and a new energy in the entire cultural system. We talked about our museums, music, books, film, theatres and even the Internet.

I was wondering if you could tell me what you got out of that national summit and expand on some of the things that we discussed and what you learned from that summit.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** First of all, I want to thank you, Mr. Louis, for your contributions, not only on this committee but in different conversations. You're an artist, and I have a lot to learn from you. I think we have a lot to learn from you. You know your stuff probably more than all of us, so thank you very much for what you've done.

It's the same as Ms. Hepfner's knowing the media sector extremely well, and it's been extremely helpful to have her with us to prepare Bill C-18.

Probably the most important thing was just seeing each other at that summit. Remember, that was in the middle of the pandemic. It was a year ago in the month of May. It was cute to see our faces on screens, but the fact is that we gathered 400 people from all over the country, specialists in museums, music, movies, television and books. It was simply amazing to have the human contact and the chance to share our point of view and our best experiences. There were things that were done in B.C. that we could learn from, and other things that were done in Quebec that we could learn from. I think it was the perfect forum to share those experiences and the challenges of the future.

I was discussing earlier today the fragility of the sector, the job situation and the instability. How can we help these people who want to follow their passion so that they don't have to leave their jobs and go work in a restaurant or anywhere else? I know they're all good jobs, but they're not doing what they love, what their passion is, so how can we help them? How can we offer more support, comfort and stability to a mother who is a ballet dancer but doesn't have the stability required to pay the mortgage, the rent, and this and that?

I think that it was very welcomed by all the sectors. I think all of us learned quite a lot, and that also helped us put in place some of the programs that followed to help in terms of support during the pandemic.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** Thank you.

One thing I took out of it was that there are larger organizations and then there are smaller organizations, lots of self-employed and small companies, theatre companies, that all need support at the same time. I was very happy to hear that discussion happening at all levels.

We faced challenges to overcome the pandemic in a culture that asks to bring people together, and all of a sudden we were unable to do that. Those were the challenges we had to overcome, but there are also some potential gains we can make moving forward. I think legislation like Bill C-11 and Bill C-18 will be very important to modernize how we support our cultural sector, so I do appreciate that.



We talked about Bill C-18 and supporting papers, so I wonder if you could expand on that, because in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga we have those small weekly papers, and they are feeling the lack of advertising revenue and are having trouble keeping people on staff and staying afloat. Can you expand on how those small papers are going to be supported by Bill C-18? Maybe use Australia as an example of how legislation similar to this has worked in other countries.

• (1220)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Be quick, Minister, if you don't mind.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** It's part of the solution, but not the whole solution. Bill C-18 will help those small papers because they can negotiate and they can have collective bargaining negotiations. This gives them way more strength to sit at the same table as giants like Google and Facebook.

There's also the periodical fund they have access to. They have access to the credit for newsrooms, the \$600 million. There's a series of programs. We're looking at how to help them even more, because they're fundamental to our democracy. Even the smaller ones have their roles to play.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** They do.

We will go to Mr. Champoux for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Shall we do as we did earlier, Mr. Chair?

Minister, earlier, my colleague Mr. Shields raised an important point, which I'd like to come back to. It's something I raise as often as I can, and that's federal government-bought advertising in the media. I talked about this in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. We're now in 2023 and I'm still talking about it, since nothing has been done.

The advertising that the federal government buys is mainly bought on Google, Facebook and social media. We're in an era where the government tries to work with these web giants, but ends up fighting them to contribute. Small media outlets are absorbing phenomenal revenue losses while tens of millions of dollars are invested in the web giants—Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft.

When we ask questions, we're told that each department manages its advertising budget envelope, that it's the agencies that choose where the money is directed, that the goal is to reach as many people as possible and, of course, that it ends up in the pockets of these web giants.

It would be nice, Minister, if we could stop passing the buck from one department to another and have someone in government say that enough is enough and that investing in advertising with these web giants doesn't make sense. This money, these tens of millions of dollars invested every year, must go into the pockets of our small media. The latter are crying out for help. Every week, another one closes its doors. There are also newsrooms that are no longer able to provide a quality service.

Today, I'd like you to commit to stop investing in these web giants and invest in Quebec and Canadian media. They are struggling and need the money.

Do you agree with me? Will you do something about it? I'd love to see that.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you, Mr. Champoux.

We're doing several things, and we're doing them together, by the way. Bill C-18 is one part of it, as well as the payroll funds and—

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Yes, but I'm really talking about the advertising that's purchased.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We buy very little or none at all.

The directives are issued by Treasury Board and each department follows them. It's not the Department of Canadian Heritage that does this. Perhaps the committee should invite my colleague to testify. I'll talk to her about it. I agree with you that there are other ways to help our small media. We try to do as much as we can—

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Yes, but you're their best spokesperson, since you're the Minister of Heritage. You're the one who hears their grievances and can best carry the message to the cabinet table. That's why I'm giving you this assignment. I know that you will have a strong voice and that you will respond to the urgency of the situation.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** You are kind, Mr. Champoux. I'll ask you to repeat that in question period.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** No, but it will appear in the minutes.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** All right, Mr. Champoux.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Thank you.

I won't take up any more of your time, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you very much, Mr. Champoux.

Mr. Julian, it's two and a half minutes for you.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to return to the question of the National Gallery of Canada, located in Ottawa. For several months, if not years, its management had been problematic. It has lost many high-level employees.

Mr. Rodriguez, you've just told us that there's going to be a new director at the National Gallery. What criteria did you use to select this person? What key assets must he or she possess so that everyone can once again become proud of this museum?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's a great question, because it's a position we've spent a lot of time on.

We're looking at several things. Here they are, in no particular order. We're looking for someone with museum experience, who has already run a museum and is recognized and respected by their peers; we're also looking for someone who is recognized and respected by donors and credible with major donors; this person must have personnel management experience and a track record of being able to manage a large number of employees, despite the challenges, and making sure it goes well; finally, we're looking for someone who wants to do this job.

• (1225)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Has the person already been selected?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We are at that point.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Very well. So we can expect an announcement shortly.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes, it won't be long. There are still a few small steps to complete, but it won't take long. Mr. Champoux will be pleased.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** I want to talk a bit about arts programs right across the country.

When we look at the estimates, we see a decrease of \$24.8 million for the Canada arts presentation fund and a decrease of \$7.7 million for the building communities through arts and heritage program. We see a decrease of \$6.9 million for the Canada cultural spaces fund. Generally, decreases mean that the regions, including mine in British Columbia, thousands of kilometres from the major arts centre in eastern Canada, tend to suffer when there are cuts.

How do you justify the cuts in all those programs at a time when, as you mentioned in your initial presentation, Mr. Minister, we need arts and culture to unite us more than ever?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I agree. Some of the cuts were not cuts but were related—and we had that discussion before—to the end of some of the pandemic programs. We knew ahead of time—and we said it before—that it had an end, and it ended at that moment, so that had an impact, but some of the programs were renewed. For example, there's the \$7 million a year—or \$14 million for two years—for the small festivals. There's money going to tourism that will include the big festivals and events.

I agree with you that the support of the government is fundamental for those organizations.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Julian.

Ms. Gladu, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, you said that faith-based communities were not in your mandate letter. I'm looking at the December 16, 2021, mandate letter that is out on the web for the Minister of Heritage, and it says:

As Minister, I expect you to include and collaborate with various communities, and actively seek out and incorporate in your work, the diverse views of Canadians. This includes women, Indigenous Peoples, Black and racialized Canadians, newcomers, faith-based communities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2 Canadians, and, in both official languages.

If you weren't aware that was in there, what I would say is that we've had 68 Christian churches burnt to the ground and multiple attacks on synagogues and places of worship. I would ask that your government take some action.

I'll turn over the rest of the questioning to my colleague Martin.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** The way I understood it is that you were talking specifically about whether we had a program for what happened to the churches, which is totally unacceptable.

However, I'll bring it to another level. This is why we need a bill such as the one that's coming, the online safety bill. Not everything, but a lot of things, start on the web. A lot of these people organize on the web. A lot of people start their actions by organizing on the web, and that should not be there. People obviously have to be protected, 100%, when they go and practise their faith. We have a role to play, and I think the online safety bill is going to play an important role too.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** You made a comment earlier, Minister, and I really appreciate having you here in person, because being face to face is critical. You and I may have a difference of opinion, but I will fight to the death for you to have your opinion, although I may disagree with it—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Of course—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I do appreciate your being here in person, because we've missed that, so thank you for being here.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** The Parliamentary Budget Officer, going back to a previous question I asked, said with regard to Bill C-18 that the majority of the revenues have already been accounted for in deals made with the CBC, Rogers and Bell. It was the PBO who said that.

Now, I know your staff is saying that the CRTC is going to take a look and see if that's representative, but do you understand that the PBO has said that deals with CBC, Rogers and Bell have already been made for the majority of the money?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No, but I understand where the confusion comes from. There are some bills in place for some of the big players, but there are none, or very few, with the small players. Now, for the big tech giants to be exempted from the bill, they will have to have deals—

• (1230)

**Mr. Martin Shields:** No, I'm saying that the big media companies in Canada already have the deals made.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Okay, but this issue—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Do you understand where the money is?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** First, Bill C-18 is not in place, so it's going to be a game-changer. Second—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I got that. They've made the deals knowing that it's coming.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Some of them have, absolutely. We know that. That's perfect. Do you know why some of those deals were made? It was because they knew that Bill C-18 was coming.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Right. Just so we understand that deals have already been done for the majority of the money—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No, no. They have to have deals with the ecosystem. You cannot have, let's say, Google arrive and say, "Okay, we'll have a deal with the Toronto Star"—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** CBC—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No, it doesn't work like that, because you need to have those in every province with big players, small players, rural communities and cities. If you don't have those, you're not exempted.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** And then there will be a few cents left on the table. That's what I'm saying.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm sorry?

**Mr. Martin Shields:** There will be a few cents left on the table, because most of the money has already—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** But there's no top. We don't know the amount. We don't know the total. It's impossible to say that 50%, 25% or 75% of the amount has been taken, because there's no top.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** All right. I'm just going by the journalists, who we say are doing good work on saying how much money is on the table, because they've done their research and they know.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** It depends on the deals that are going to be negotiated. It's impossible for us to say how much money there will be.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Okay. Let's go to the National Arts Centre over here, where I am a frequent participant. I like live performances.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We'll go together someday.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I would appreciate that.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** When I turn on a car, my radio is Virgin Radio because I never turn on the radio in the car.

I met with the indigenous staff who have been hired there. They said there was money just to hire two staff, but none to do any programming. What's the point of having just two indigenous staff over there, but no money for programming?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We'll have to get back to you, because we don't manage internally what they do with their funds.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** It's like Bill C-91, which you referred to earlier. I was there when Bill C-91 got jammed through, right at the end. How long did it take to appoint the three commissioners for that?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** That was under my predecessor. It took a while, but the commission is in place. The commission is there. They have the three directors. Things are working out now.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Now, can you tell me how much of that money—that \$300 million—has gone out to the indigenous organizations?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We're distributing...

How much money is there per year?

Now we've changed the way we work, Mr. Shields. Before, we would match everything. We received projects and we sent money. That is not the basis of the bill. It's the opposite—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I know the bill. I was there.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Martin—

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** We said, "You guys know what to do with it better than we do", so we made three specific deals with the three NIOs. We give them the money, and they distribute it for their projects.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** How much of that money is out the—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Martin. Your time is up.

We'll go to Mr. Bittle for the Liberals for five minutes.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for being here today.

I know Mr. Champoux asked this question in French, but I'm wondering whether you can address it in English as well.

We've seen at this committee, and even around the world, the contempt Meta and Google have for the democratic process, not just in Canada but also in Australia and even in the United States. They are refusing to bring witnesses, giving evasive answers, threatening members of parliaments and threatening to take away news from Canadians.

I'm wondering whether you can comment, as minister, on the actions of the tech giants.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you, Mr. Bittle.

Thank you also for all the work you've been doing on the important bills. You've done a lot on the consultations and all of that, and thank you for replacing me in the last days when I couldn't be here.

I'm worried, Mr. Bittle, as everyone around this table should be. Whatever the colour of the party, if we run for office, it's because we believe in democracy. It's because we have the privilege to represent the people by voting. When a big tech company, whatever the size, with the amount of money and the powerful lawyers they have, comes here and tells us, "Well, if you don't do this or that, I'm pulling the plug", that's a threat. That is unacceptable. That, in my opinion, should be equally unacceptable for all of us, whatever our political colour, here and in the Senate. What Google did by cutting access to information to a certain percentage of Canadians is unacceptable.

I have never done something because I was afraid of a threat. I will never do that.

• (1235)

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Thank you, Minister.

I would like to take us back a bit, to the Bill C-11 debate.

It's almost, at times, as if we're having this parallel discussion. There's what's happening in reality, what's actually in the bill and what we hear in the House of Commons, especially from the Conservative Party. We even heard a bit of that today, when there was a suggestion that the CRTC, which is independent, is looking into Fox News. It's interesting that Conservatives are standing up for Fox News. It was suggested that it was related to Bill C-11, even though it was an independent complaint made by Égale Canada with respect to the treatment of the LGBTQ2+ community. The CRTC is independently investigating that, and the suggestion that this is censorship via Bill C-11....

I wonder whether you could comment on this parallel debate leading into misinformation on Bill C-11.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** It has nothing to do with it. I don't know what else I can say. There's absolutely no link between Bill C-11 and the decisions of the CRTC or their consultations on this. It's zero.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Building upon that, I try to suggest to the constituents with whom I have conversations that when they hear online that we're going to go to YouTube or Spotify.... We're still going to listen to and watch what we want.

I wonder whether you can comment on the actual effect on the person sitting in front of their computer screen. What is it going to look like for your average Canadian?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Nothing.

At the end of the day, we're asking the streamers to contribute to the creation of Canadian content and make sure they showcase some of the stuff we do, because we do great stuff in terms of music and cinema. They can do it online or off-line, or they can put big panels on the side of the road that say, "Hey, watch this show—it's absolutely amazing." On their website, they can advertise some of the things they do in terms of creating Canadian content.

However, at the end of the day, you, Mr. Bittle—and only you—will decide what you watch. That's it.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** But I won't decide what other people watch. I want to make sure that's clear. It's a limited role that I have as parliamentary secretary.

Thank you so much, Minister. I have just a few seconds.

Again, I'd like to highlight your point. Even if we wanted to, with tens of millions or hundreds of millions of videos uploaded a day just on one streaming site, YouTube, and so few employees at the CRTC, it wouldn't be possible to participate in or to engage in the conspiracy theories—if they were true—even though they continue to be propagated by the opposition.

I think my time is up, but I want to say thank you for being here, Minister.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Mr. Bittle.

I'm going to make an arbitrary decision.

We have 22 minutes before the hour. Minister and department officials, if you don't mind, we would like to do a short fourth round, because you have committed to us until one o'clock.

Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to give the Conservatives and Liberals five minutes each and the NDP and the Bloc two and half minutes each.

That's what we'll do, and then we have some voting on the main estimates.

**An hon. member:** It should be five minutes for everyone.

**An hon. member:** *C'est inéquitable.*

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Both of you have received generous time from Mr. Waugh today.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Anyway, let's go with five minutes.

It will be Ms. Lantsman for the Conservatives.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Sure. Thanks.

I want to go back to the policy directive that hasn't been issued and the fact that the CRTC has launched consultations or will be launching consultations. I think it's confusing for Canadians to understand what those consultations are about.

I understand you're going to say that the CRTC is at arm's length, but what do you think those consultations are about if there are no policy directives on the table?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I don't work with the CRTC on what they're doing at the moment. What I'm working on is making sure that I come up with the draft policy as soon as possible.

What I understand is that they're consulting generally more broadly, and that those consultations will be adapted when they receive the—

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** They're just consulting.

• (1240)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** They are consulting on Bill C-11. However, on the general aspect of the transformation, there's already a lot of stuff that we know. We know that we're modernizing a lot that should have been modernized a long time ago. They're looking at that, and then they are going to receive the policy direction and they're going to adapt it to that.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Have there been any political staff who have met with the CRTC with regard to any of the directives?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Not me, no.

I don't think so.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** "I don't think so", or "no"?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Okay. I'll tell you why I'm asking.

Recently the CRTC published a web page. It was called "Myths and Facts". I'm sure you've seen it. It has probably come up in your media monitoring, since you made it better after the Laith Marouf case.

On this page, the CRTC characterizes concerns held by the opposition—and frankly, content creators, academics and everybody we heard who talked about Bill C-11—as myths. It only takes a little bit of critical thinking to see that the facts espoused by the CRTC on that website are directly parroting the talking points that you have used as a minister on Bill C-11.

I want to know whether there was any formal instruction to the CRTC on any of this.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** No, not at all. No, but....

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** Was it something that the CRTC did on its own?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Ms. Lantsman, if something is not true, it's very possible that I would say it's not true and that they would say it's not true because it's not a fact. I think one of the problems around the debate on Bill C-11 is that there are a lot of things that are not facts and have nothing to do with the bill, zero.

Freedom of expression has nothing to do with Bill C-11. It is a parallel discussion that some people wanted to initiate, and so they would not discuss the bill. The bill is simply asking the streamers to contribute to Canadian culture.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman:** When Canadians, academics, content creators—everybody who had issue with the bill—see the CRTC consulting widely, without the policy directives that you said Parliament would see, and then see the same talking points that you've used being parroted directly on the CRTC website, you could see why that would concern Canadians, correct?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Well, you can look at that way, but once again, if there are things that are not true, they can say what they want in terms of discussions. I don't speak for them. They are totally independent, and I'll always respect that. One of the fundamental things in our democracy is to respect the independence of those institutions.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Minister, I want to finish up by talking about funding for sport. You know that the committee is undertak-

ing a study of safe sport, and I see that you have about \$265 million in the budget.

I'm concerned because Hockey Canada has only implemented six of its 36 recommendations, and they're receiving funding again.

The Minister of Sport, after hearing from all of the athletes that they want a public inquiry, has not come forward with that and has instead implemented an accountability mechanism in Sport Canada, when Sport Canada was identified by all of the athletes as being part of the problem and not part of the solution.

I want to know whether you could tell us how much, if any, of that \$265 million in your budget is going to support the Minister of Sport's initiatives.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** You have probably invited the Minister of Sport to come here to discuss the estimates. It's under her. It's not under me.

If you didn't invite her, it's....

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Okay.

Well, I'm glad to hear that none of your funds are going towards that.

Could you tell us, then, what the funding from Heritage under "Sport" is going to?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I don't touch sport. I'm sorry. I'd love to. I'm a big hockey fan and a soccer fan. I practise a lot of sports, but—

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** There is \$260 million in the Department of Canadian Heritage budget that says "Sport".

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I will turn to Mr. Doiron.

**Mr. Eric Doiron (Chief Financial Officer, Department of Canadian Heritage):** Thanks for that question.

The sports program is under the Department of Canadian Heritage, but it is Minister St-Onge who is responsible for those funds.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Ms. Gladu.

We're going to move on. We're going to welcome Mr. Housefather virtually.

Anthony, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.)** Thank you, Kevin.

[Translation]

Thank you, Minister.

I also want to extend my deepest condolences to you on the loss of your father. It's really good of you to be here as you and your family are grieving.

I'd like to start with a question about CBC/Radio-Canada. This has already been addressed by Mr. Coteau, but I'd still like to ask you the question.

If someone told you that you could give funds to the French network of CBC/Radio-Canada, but not to the English network, what problems would that cause? Do journalists on the French and English networks share equipment, especially outside Quebec? What would happen?

• (1245)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's a very good question, Mr. Housefather, but I don't have an answer. In fact, I don't understand what the official opposition is trying to do.

As I mentioned earlier, CBC/Radio-Canada is an institution. The funds that are allocated go to the entire institution. There's a president, a board of directors, a senior management team. It has shared offices across the country. Very often, the same journalist will ask me a question in French and say:

[*English*]

"Can you repeat the same thing in English, please?", or she'll maybe ask a different question in English, but that is the same person, so what do you do with that person? Do you pay that person only when she's asking questions in French and not in English?

[*Translation*]

When you cross the street to do an interview at CBC/Radio-Canada, the security guards at the entrance are the same. The infrastructure and editing studios are the same. I don't understand what the opposition is trying to do.

That's the first thing, Mr. Housefather. You're going to understand what I'm going to say very well.

A fundamental right is being taken away from the English-speaking minority in Quebec. CBC/Radio-Canada is there for French-speaking minorities outside Quebec. What the opposition is saying today is that we don't care about the English-speaking minority in Quebec and that they're going to take away access to news in their language from our public network, CBC/Radio-Canada.

[*English*]

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** I want to thank you for that, Minister, because what you are saying is absolutely true. People think of the English-speaking community in Quebec as being only the English-speaking community in Montreal, which is well served by institutions, and forget that we have remote English-speaking communities in the Gaspé, on the North Shore, in Trois-Rivières, in Quebec City and in Abitibi. Those people make use of CBC. CBC Radio and CBC Television are the rare things that they get unless they have satellite, so thank you for always standing up for our community as well.

I also want to come back to how you've been getting some questions about sports and about diversity and inclusion, and there's a confusion, because of course you are the Minister of Canadian Heritage, but there are other ministers who are responsible for portions of the budget of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Could you clarify that? It has to be made clear that you are not responsible for diversity and inclusion or for sports.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** According to the way a government works, it is the Prime Minister's prerogative to delegate responsibilities to members of his cabinet.

As he did for me in 2018, the Prime Minister can tell a minister that he or she will be responsible for both Canadian heritage and multiculturalism. That's why I was so proud to tour Canada to build the whole anti-racism strategy. However, when I returned to the department, this time the multiculturalism component was no longer my responsibility, but that of Mr. Hussen.

Ms. St-Onge takes care of with sports and Ms. Petitpas Taylor is responsible for official languages, albeit under the big umbrella of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Nevertheless, the concrete responsibilities of day-to-day management, signatures and all the rest are delegated by the Prime Minister to specific ministers. As a result, I'm not responsible for day-to-day management, and I have absolutely nothing to do with these programs.

[*English*]

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** That's why I wanted to clarify that. I know, for example, that you're passionate about sports, especially soccer. I know you're passionate about religious minority communities in Canada. You have often talked to me about anti-Semitism and other communities, the protection of churches and the protection of all of the things that have been raised today. I know you are passionate about them, and I don't want people to think that just because you're not responsible for them, you don't care about these things. I know you care deeply about them.

Mr. Chair, I think my time is up. I just wanted to leave it at that.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Mr. Housefather.

We'll go to Mr. Champoux for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

It will be difficult to be gentler than that in my questions, Minister.

• (1250)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** You can try.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** No. I would like to come back to a few points that I think are very important.

First, we talked about advertising earlier and I just want to remind you of a few facts. We had a bit of a laugh at the end of my speaking period, but I just want to tell you how important it is, because our media talk to us about it regularly. It's something we find very difficult to explain to ourselves. I intend to talk to you about it again very soon.

I also want to talk to you about this committee's report to revive culture following the pandemic. I think we can agree that we're pretty much back to a situation where people can go back to attending shows safely. There are still fears, however, and efforts still need to be made; the various stakeholders in the cultural industry are asking us to do so, particularly the smaller festivals, as I mentioned earlier.

Recommendation 9 of our report, Minister, urged the federal government to "make significant efforts to encourage Canadians to return to live arts, culture, heritage and sporting events." This is a category of events to which small festivals correspond quite well, and large ones too for that matter, I'm sure we agree.

Despite this, I note a decrease of about \$25 million for the Canada Arts Presentation Fund, another \$9.5 million for the Canada Music Fund, a decrease of \$7.7 million for the Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage program and another \$6.9 million for the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund.

It seems to me that this doesn't quite address the recommendation we made.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes, but this is about funds to counter the pandemic, Mr. Champoux, and on that—

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Yes, but in that report, we said that these funds were also needed once the pandemic had passed, because the recovery of this sector, which we recognized as more difficult than that of many other economic sectors, depended on this aid, which has not been maintained.

That was the sense of that recommendation, and that's what's very disappointing to the industry right now.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** You will agree that the help we all worked on together was substantial in every way. It's what's kept so many players alive, large and small, in the music business, the performing arts business and so on, thankfully. However, we've always made it clear that these funds were pandemic-related.

Now we can do other things. We can, for example, renew the funding for the local festivals component of the building communities through arts and heritage program; we've just added \$14 million over two years, so \$7 million a year. There's also the tourism strategy we're developing for major festivals and events. I'm very passionate about the music sector. I'm currently looking into it to see what we can do in future budgets.

There are also other mechanisms we can use, but I share your interest in helping these people.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I have very little time; I think my time is up.

I just want to make you aware of this. Small festivals are going to need you, they're going to communicate with you.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm glad. I know them well.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** We're going to have to loosen the purse strings a bit to help them this summer, they're going to need it badly.

Thank you very much for being here.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you, Mr. Champoux.

We'll move on to Peter Julian for two and a half minutes. You have the floor.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today, as during all discussions regarding bills C-11 and C-18, we have often heard disinformation from large technology companies, who want nothing to do with these bills.

In the coming months, with the implementation of bills C-11 and C-18, it will be even more important for Canadians to know exactly what's in these bills.

What are you going to do, Minister, to counter this disinformation often promoted by interests with enormous resources?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** This is a very topical issue. We can also see it with the advent of artificial intelligence and the increased risk of disinformation.

It's not up to the government to say what disinformation is or is not, i.e., that such and such a message is disinformation and such and such is not. There's an element of debate in all this.

There are several answers to your question. One of the main answers is Bill C-18. Indeed, it reinforces a free, independent, autonomous and impartial press that likes to dig, does research, writes and disseminates information based on facts.

We're also setting up other programs. I'm thinking, for example, of the programs we've implemented to foster civic education, to help young people and different groups recognize what might be disinformation.

However, at no time would it be for the government to say that it knows what is true or not. We agree on that.

We need to help institutions that give the public access to valid, factual information.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Okay.

We're going to come through Bill C-18. The NDP fought hard to get a number of amendments to stimulate local journalism. I want to shout out to the New West Anchor, the Burnaby Beacon, Burnaby NOW and the Royal City Record, all of whom will benefit from this.

Is it in the plans of the government to have those voices and that local journalism revived after years of having big tech suck all the advertising money out of communities? Is it your plan to ensure that Canadians are aware of how we are reviving the local journalistic sector and uniting people in their communities?

• (1255)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes. I want to thank you personally, Mr. Julian, for all your work on Bill C-18 and the support you gave us—the NDP, but you more at a personal level—because the work we did collectively is super-important.

In too many regions, those papers—and Mr. Shields mentioned it—are struggling or disappearing. In some cases, an MP goes back home and there's no one to cover it, and that's bad for democracy. People should know what's happening in their city hall and what their MLA is doing, what their MP is doing.

That's why we're going to be reinforcing those small papers through Bill C-18, and that's why collective bargaining is so important and why it has been included in that bill.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you very much, Peter.

Thank you again, Minister, for coming for the last two hours, and thank you to the staff of Canadian Heritage.

I have one request. It's from Regina, Saskatchewan, which is my province. The RCMP museum there is hoping to get national status. Can I flag it for you? The RCMP is 150 years old this year, and we're hoping to join those in the precinct—also Winnipeg and Pier 21.

I just ask that you consider the Regina RCMP museum's national status.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez:** Definitely. Thank you for the message. We are definitely working on that, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you very much.

Now, to the rest, we have to vote on the main estimates. We have 16 votes here.

How would you like to apply this?

Go ahead, Ms. Gladu.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** I would recommend that we pass them all on division all at once.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** That is a brilliant suggestion.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** All right.

COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

Vote 1—Payments to the Council.....\$364,238,813

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Vote 1—Payments to the Corporation for operating expenditures.....\$1,173,123,435

Vote 5—Payments to the Corporation for working capital.....\$4,000,000

Vote 10—Payments to the Corporation for capital expenditures.....\$110,046,000

(Votes 1, 5 and 10 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Vote 1—Payments to the Museum for operating and capital expenditures.....\$25,458,013

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY

Vote 1—Payments to the Museum for operating and capital expenditures.....\$73,251,251

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF IMMIGRATION AT PIER 21

Vote 1—Payments to the Museum for operating and capital expenditures.....\$8,111,694

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE

Vote 1—Payments to the Museum for operating and capital expenditures.....\$27,718,568

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN RACE RELATIONS FOUNDATION

Vote 1—Payments to the Foundation.....\$9,000,000

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$9,896,828

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$202,886,911

Vote 5—Grants and contributions.....\$1,707,891,504

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF CANADA

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$147,786,024

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$40,537,795

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE CORPORATION

Vote 1—Payments to the Corporation for operating expenditures.....\$46,416,148

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

NATIONAL FILM BOARD

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$66,490,205

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

Vote 1—Payments to the Gallery for operating and capital expenditures.....\$37,778,278

Vote 5—Payment to the Gallery for the acquisition of objects for the collection and related costs.....\$8,000,000

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Vote 1—Payments to the Museum for operating and capital expenditures.....\$29,933,096

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)



TELEFILM CANADA

Vote 1—Payments to the corporation to be used for the purposes set out in the  
Telefilm Canada Act.....\$151,908,479

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

NATIONAL BATTLEFIELDS COMMISSION

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$11,337,820

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Shall I report the main estimates to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Kevin Waugh):** Thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Minister and department officials.

The meeting is adjourned.

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