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# Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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Chair: Lisa Hepfner





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Tuesday, April 28, 2026

• (1100)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 34 of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Before we begin, I'd like to ask all in-person participants to read the guidelines written on the updated cards on the table in front of you. They are measures in place to prevent feedback incidents and protect the health and safety of all participants, especially our interpreters. You'll notice that there's a QR code on the card. It links to a short awareness video.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

Finally, the clerk distributed two operational budgets. One is to cover extra meals for our study on the state of journalism and media sectors, and one is for the meeting with the minister on the main estimates.

Will you move to adopt them?

Moved by Ms. Royer.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, September 22, 2025, the committee is meeting to study the state of the journalism and media sectors.

We have two new members joining us today, Ms. Tatiana Auguste and Ms. Alana Hirtle. Welcome to the heritage committee. It's good to have you.

I think everybody is in the room today and all of our witnesses have appeared at this committee before.

Christa Dickenson, from CPAC, the Cable Public Affairs Channel, is with us in the room. We also have Kevin Desjardins, president of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters—welcome, sir—and Jeff Thiessen from the Miracle Channel Association. We have Barry Rooke, executive director of the National Campus and Community Radio Association—it's good to see you again—and Amir Epstein, chief executive officer from Tafsik Organization.

Welcome to everyone. You will each have five minutes for opening statements before I turn it over to committee members for questioning.

We'll start with CPAC.

Christa Dickenson, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Christa Dickenson (President and Chief Executive Officer, Cable Public Affairs Channel (CPAC)):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning. My name is Christa Dickenson. I am the president and chief executive officer of CPAC, the Cable Public Affairs Channel.

Thank you, first of all, for inviting CPAC to speak to this important study.

The issues before this committee are immediate and deeply consequential. As the members know, last week CPAC made the difficult decision to eliminate our two flagship programs and to proceed with layoffs, affecting 15% of our staff. This incredibly difficult step was necessary for CPAC.

CPAC is an independent, not-for-profit, commercial-free, bilingual media organization, focused on Canadian politics and public affairs.

[*Translation*]

CPAC is a non-profit service. It's not a commercial operation. We don't produce opinion programs. Our mission is simple: to provide full, comprehensive, unfiltered and impartial access to Canada's democratic institutions in both official languages.

[*English*]

As viewing habits changed, we evolved. Today, CPAC provides up to 14 simultaneous livestreams online, including coverage of media availabilities, scrums, caucus activity and major announcements, in addition to the televised parliamentary programming. Further, CPAC hosts an archive of over 70,000 hours of political and public affairs programming dating back to 1977.

Canadians know they can rely on us for the complete story, as do Canada's journalists. Veteran parliamentary reporter Bob Fife wrote to us recently, right after we announced our cuts. He said that CPAC is an indispensable service for everyone and that, without access to the media events that CPAC covers, it would be a real challenge for reporters to do their jobs properly.

However, CPAC is operating under significant and growing financial strain. We do not receive ongoing government funding. Further, our CRTC conditions of service dictate that we are not permitted to sell advertising, which is key to ensuring that we maintain our neutrality.

CPAC's main source of ongoing revenue by far is the CRTC-mandated wholesale fee we receive from cable and satellite customers, but this funding model is eroding faster than anticipated. As Canadians cut the cord, revenues decline even as demand for online access grows.

Recognizing the strain CPAC is under, the CRTC recently approved a three-cent rate increase for CPAC, which will come into effect this September. This increase is critical for CPAC in the short term, but it is not, nor is it intended to be, a long-term solution.

Your study examines the transformation of Canada's media landscape. Traditional revenues are eroding; digital platforms are rising, and the fiscal and regulatory framework is struggling to keep pace.

CPAC and others have advocated to the CRTC to establish a services of exceptional importance fund. The fund would see streaming services contribute to certain public interest services like CPAC, in a way that is similar to what cable and satellite providers do today.

- (1105)

[*Translation*]

This approach acknowledges the growing importance of online access to reliable and comprehensive news content for Canadians. It also recognizes that online services must contribute to the broadcasting system and to the important public services, like CPAC, that are made possible by that system.

[*English*]

Without a stable and sustainable fiscal and funding framework, services like CPAC and news content and other broadcast media will continue to contract, if not disappear. When they do, our democracy will feel the impact. There will be fewer cameras, less coverage and less visibility in how decisions are made.

Your study is an opportunity to address that, to preserve Canadian media and journalism, its independence and impartiality, and its role in supporting our democratic and cultural sovereignty.

There is no substitute for what CPAC does; it is a public good. Like many public goods, it requires thoughtful, timely policy support to endure.

With that, I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

It was very upsetting to hear about the layoffs at CPAC. Thank you for describing for us the landscape behind them.

We'll move now to Kevin Desjardins from the Canadian Association of Broadcasters. You have the floor, sir, for five minutes.

**Kevin Desjardins (President, Canadian Association of Broadcasters):** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Good morning, everyone.

My name is Kevin Desjardins and I'm president of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, or CAB. We represent commercial broadcasters nationwide, including radio, television and specialty services. We have 77 owner groups, with a total of 797 stations and services across the country.

You've had the opportunity to hear from several CAB members during your study, and two of them are here today. In those presentations, you heard them say several times that journalism is a critical part of the work they do to serve their communities. However, they also need support so they can continue to provide this fundamental democratic service.

[*English*]

Commercial radio and television broadcasters remain a cornerstone of Canada's news ecosystem. Our members provide trusted professional journalism to millions of Canadians on radio and television stations across the country, as well as through their online services and news portals. Broadcasters are relied upon by Canadians as their primary and most-trusted source for news in communities of all sizes and in all regions.

Private broadcasters also spend more than \$680 million in news programming, the vast majority of which is invested in journalists in newsrooms and reporting in their communities. That's significantly more than any other players across the news sector, including the CBC.

The challenge for Canada's broadcast newsrooms is not one of reach, relevance, trust or value. The largest challenge in supporting newsrooms in Canada is the fact that two of the most important market-based supports for journalism have been undermined by foreign online giants. On the advertising side, we see that 75% of Canadian ad dollars are now flowing to foreign digital platforms. That's \$11.2 billion Canadian leaving our economy every year.

On the subscription side, cord cutting of Canadian cable and satellite services in favour of foreign online streaming giants means that a further \$5 billion Canadian is leaving our domestic media sector. The foreign streamers themselves estimate that this figure will hit \$10 billion in the near future.

What we effectively have is a trade deficit in our media industry, and the first places to feel the squeeze are Canada's newsrooms. All news producers face declining advertising revenues, disruption from global media behemoths and rising production costs. Moreover, while the challenges faced by news producers—whether print, digital-first or broadcast media—are the same, existing direct funding mechanisms largely exclude commercial broadcasters.

This is why the CAB recommends the three following measures be undertaken to help keep journalists in newsrooms across Canada: First, provide emergency support to local independent television stations; second, extend the Canadian journalism labour tax credit to broadcasters; and third, devote 70% of the government's ad budget to Canadian media companies.

On the first item, you have heard from several recipients of the independent local news fund on the immediate issue they face, as an appeal by global streamers has delayed the flow of new money into this important fund. It should be underlined that the core of the streamers' argument to the Federal Court of Appeal is that they don't do news, so they shouldn't have to support it. While this shortfall in funds may be a temporary issue, the consequences of delays could be permanent, with newsroom cuts and more stations closing.

Second, we think it is a matter of basic fairness that the Government of Canada rethink the journalism labour tax credit. Its current application exclusively to print media fails to recognize the reality of news media in Canada. Whatever their origins as an outlet, many print media typically also provide audio and video content now, and broadcasters create text-based news content through their websites and portals.

Third, it is vital that policies with respect to government advertising be addressed. The Government of Canada continues to disproportionately place the bulk of its advertising on digital platforms—two-thirds of the government's ad spend—with the majority of that going to foreign-owned platforms.

Dedicating 70% of the Government of Canada's advertising revenues to our domestic radio, TV, print and Canadian-owned digital media will not only help to reverse this trend but will also benefit the government by positioning its messages alongside trusted sources of national and local news.

• (1110)

Finally, Canada must reject any attempt to treat our media sovereignty as a bargaining chip in the ongoing review of CUSMA. The Online Streaming Act does not fit any good-faith definition of a non-tariff trade barrier. As I've already mentioned, foreign platforms have abundant access to the Canadian market. In fact, foreign-owned digital media platforms continue to enjoy an easier path to accessing the Canadian market than regulated Canadian broadcasters.

[Translation]

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jeff Thiessen, from the Miracle Channel Association.

[English]

You have the floor for five minutes, sir.

**Jeff Thiessen (Vice-President, Miracle Channel Association):**  
Thank you.

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today on behalf of the Miracle Channel Association, now using MCA Media Group to identify ourselves as we've grown. We are an independent local broadcaster based in Lethbridge, Alberta, and a proud member of the local independent television stations group, the LITS group. MCA Media produces and broadcasts high-quality, locally relevant news and programming that serves southern Alberta, including positive-content television through the Miracle Channel and our expanding digital platforms. Our remarks align with those of our LITS colleagues who have already appeared before this committee.

LITS stations like ours serve around four million Canadians, over 10% of the population, in some of the country's smallest and most underserved television markets, yet we are operating under extreme financial pressure. This is why emergency bridge funding for the independent local news fund, the ILNF, is our immediate priority. MCA Media has been hit particularly hard by recent CRTC decisions. We were executing on a plan that included funding from streamer contributions to the ILNF, obligations the commission imposed under the Online Streaming Act, Bill C-11. Over the last four years, we invested heavily, in good faith, increasing our local news and exceeding our conditions of licence. We expected that additional funding to arrive in August 2025. Instead, our allocation was cut by 43%, when the commission prematurely added Corus. Overall, MCA Media's funding from the ILNF has fallen 72% since 2017, the opposite of what was supposed to happen.

In the meantime, larger ILNF stations have generously allowed smaller operators like us to borrow funds to manage cash flow. If the appeals court does not uphold the CRTC decision to support local news for small markets, it will be devastating. Not only will small stations lose the additional funding everyone planned for; we'll also have to repay those loans. This uncertainty has left us in dire circumstances. Employees have left and we have not replaced them. We have job openings, and we want to hire more journalists, but we simply do not have the money. It's hard to remain entrepreneurial and maximize every opportunity to serve our communities when public policy works in theory but fails in practice. If a key goal of the ILNF is to support local news in underserved markets, the current situation is having the opposite effect.

We also note the ongoing failure of the Online News Act to deliver anticipated compensation from dominant platforms. LITS has formally applied to the CRTC to commence bargaining with Meta, providing unequivocal evidence that Meta's supposed news ban is a charade. This underscores the act's critical importance for independent local broadcasters.

We note the heritage minister's recent comments expressing disappointment that the CRTC is not moving faster to implement the Online Streaming Act. The reality is that we are two decades late, not just a year. This continued delay directly harms local broadcasters, which are required to meet strict Canadian content quotas, while foreign streamers capture audience and revenue with minimal obligations.

On government advertising, my colleague Rod Schween was bang on. Broadcasters are required to meet rigorous Canadian content requirements. Shouldn't the government that imposes those requirements on us match it with their own advertising spend? We also call for closing the advertising loophole that allows foreign digital platforms to siphon revenue without equivalent regulatory or content obligations.

Regarding innovation, independent local broadcasters such as MCA have invested heavily in digital transformation, new platforms and audience engagement. We meet and have long exceeded online distribution requirements while maintaining local roots and public service mandates in smaller communities.

In closing, we support greater transparency in funding programs. Broadcast programs like the ILNF already include robust reporting requirements. The survival of independent local television is not just an industry issue; it is a democratic imperative. Canadians in every region, especially in smaller markets served by stations like MCA Media, deserve reliable, locally produced news and information. We stand ready to work with this committee and the government to deliver the urgent measures needed.

Thank you. I look forward to the questions.

• (1115)

**The Chair:** Thank you. It's good to see more Lethbridge in the room.

We'll turn now to Barry Rooke from the National Campus and Community Radio Association.

You have five minutes.

**Barry Rooke (Executive Director, National Campus and Community Radio Association):** Good morning, and thank you for the invitation to appear.

My name is Barry Rooke. I've been the executive director of the National Campus and Community Radio Association since 2015. I started my broadcasting career at the age of 15, volunteering at one of our member stations located in Guelph. Working in the community radio sector has had a profound impact on how I see the world and how I act within it.

The NCRA represents over 120 English campus, community and indigenous not-for-profit radio stations serving more than 100 communities across Canada, broadcasting in over 55 languages. Our entire sector is powered by approximately 900 staff, with more than 23,000 volunteers contributing the equivalent of over \$40 million annually in volunteer labour—and much more through advertising and music.

We are a national system of local media deeply embedded in the communities we serve. Our member stations are often the only source of local information, whether in a rural town, on a campus or on an indigenous reserve.

Community radio is not a legacy system in decline. It's a system that has adapted. Our stations have expanded into digital streaming, podcasting and social platforms while maintaining accessible over-the-air broadcasting that provides local journalism, cultural programming and emergency broadcasting—often in areas in which commercial broadcasters have reduced service or exited entirely. In fact, I receive inquiries to start a station at least once a month, and we currently have a dozen or so stations that intend to apply for CRTC licences this year.

Despite this, the policy and funding environment has not kept pace with the role we now play. There is a structural gap in support for local journalism delivered through community broadcasters. Programs designed to support journalism under Bill C-18, the Online News Act, from 2022, have not been built with our model in mind. As a result, many of our stations, despite producing news and spoken word content under CRTC requirements, have been excluded from funding and had their social media platforms blocked—not just their ability to share news.

While the CRTC has recognized the need for sector support through the Online Streaming Act, implementation of those efforts has faced ongoing legal and structural challenges and has not resulted in any funding becoming available.

At the same time, we're seeing a continued contraction of commercial broadcasters and local journalism, as well as the closures of broadcasting and journalism schools across the country.

Finally, the economics of media have shifted dramatically. Advertising revenues have moved away from local markets. Community broadcasters who reinvest directly in local services are left out, without sustainable funding models to match the public service role. By not advertising on our stations, governments are missing out on reaching millions of people who don't have access to other local media.

Our proposed solution follows the model in Australia, which uses a small amount of core stable funding that allows the sector to do what it does best: serve the community. In Australia, the government has allocated \$20 million to community broadcasters and \$20 million to aboriginal broadcasters over the past 15 years. This means that a country with two-thirds of our population has close to double the number of non-profit stations and has a thriving local media sector.

Our solution is the community radio initiative. We are seeking an annual investment of \$30 million—which would result in about \$95,000 per station—and additional top-up funding for special projects, as well as an annual sector survey and report to ensure that the money invested is providing the expected value to the Canadian public. In practical terms, the level of funding proposed by this initiative is modest. It would support a mix of staffing and operations that would keep stations on the air and maintain their ability to provide consistent local news, emergency information and essential connections to community services, local business and public programs.

We respectfully ask that this committee include a clear recommendation in its report to fund the community radio initiative and to transmit that recommendation to the Minister of Finance and the Standing Committee on Finance as part of the upcoming budget process.

I can say for certain that many of your colleagues in this room and within your parties have found their paths to becoming an MP through one of our stations. I'm asking you for your support to ensure that the media sector remains stable so that it can do its part in Canada's democratic processes.

Thank you.

• (1120)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Last, but not least, we'll turn to Amir Epstein from the Tafsik Organization.

Welcome, sir. You have five minutes.

**Amir Epstein (Chief Executive Officer, Tafsik Organization):** Thank you.

My name is Amir Epstein. I am the chief executive officer of Tafsik Organization, one of the fastest-growing Jewish organizations in Canada.

The explosion of anti-Semitism we are witnessing across Canada today is not an accident. It is not spontaneous and it is not happening in isolation. It is being fed, shaped and normalized by the information Canadians consume every single day. This includes our schools and our universities, and it absolutely includes the CBC, our main national public broadcaster.

The CBC is not a fringe outlet; it is not a blog. It is a taxpayer-funded national institution to the tune of over \$1 billion, which Canadians are told they can trust. When that power is exercised carelessly, when unverified claims are amplified, when biased sources are relied upon and when narratives are presented without proper scrutiny, the consequences are not theoretical; they are societal and they are measurable.

When the CBC amplifies claims from terrorist sources without any verification or context, it is not simply reporting; it is acting as a conduit for narratives that are designed to promote hate and violence against my Jewish community. The most glaring example of this was the reporting on the al Ahli hospital explosion in Gaza in 2023. Within minutes, claims originating from Hamas—a designated terrorist organization that murdered my people—were spread across Canada by the CBC, alleging that Israel had bombed the hospital and killed hundreds of civilians. Well, it was all a lie: The explosion was caused by a misfired rocket launched from Gaza. However, the damage was already done. Millions of Canadians will forever believe the lie that Israel had bombed that hospital.

When those narratives portray the only Jewish state—and by extension Jews in Canada—as uniquely immoral or violent, they reinforce deep-rooted and dangerous patterns of hate. This is how modern anti-Semitism operates—in the form of anti-Zionism—and it is repackaged through the language of politics and activism. However, the structure remains the same: the singling out, the demonization and the application of double standards.

Classic anti-Semitism has largely been associated with the far right, including the neo-Nazis and the white supremacists, relying on blood libels and tropes that Jews control governments and manipulate society to justify hatred of the Jewish community. Today, anti-Zionism has become a modern vehicle for the same hatred. It emerges from segments of the far left and Islamist movements, using similar falsehoods reframed to claim that Israel and Zionists control global affairs or commit genocide and apartheid, which are lies that some politicians, such as Olivia Chow, have accepted to justify hostility toward Jews.

We have seen narratives from Hamas and its proxy UNRWA, the United Nations, Al Jazeera, the Government of Qatar and the Islamic regime in Iran amplified without the level of scrutiny expected from a publicly funded broadcaster. This is not journalism at the highest standard, nor is it journalism at the most basic level. The CBC is acting as a mouthpiece for narratives by terrorist entities, something that would have been unfathomable 20 years ago.

Media does not just inform; it conditions Canadian attitudes. The CBC tells audiences who deserves sympathy, who deserves skepticism and who deserves blame. If Hindus are attacked by Khalistanis, who cares? If over 100 churches are burned to the ground, who cares? The media choose what is newsworthy and what isn't based on their own biases. We are now seeing those attitudes manifest here in Canada. Jewish students are facing hostility on campuses, while synagogues, Jewish schools and Jewish-owned restaurants are being shot at repeatedly.

The CBC elevates fringe anti-Zionist Jewish voices to represent the broader Canadian Jewish community, when they actually represent only themselves. This creates a distorted picture for Canadians. The vast majority of Jews in Canada and worldwide believe in the right to self-determination in our ancestral homeland, just as every culture in the world should. Anyone claiming to speak as a Jew while denying that right is detached from Jewish history and reality. When the CBC platforms those voices, it reinforces false narratives about Israel and the Jewish people, contributing to a climate of hostility, rising anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

A publicly funded broadcaster must reflect reality, not shape it selectively. This is not about silencing criticism of Israel, as its government can and should be scrutinized. However, scrutiny must be grounded in facts and applied consistently to every nation. The CBC helps shape how millions of Canadians understand the world, and in this case, it is contributing to an environment in which anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are increasingly normalized.

This is about whether Jewish Canadians can live openly and safely, whether students can walk on campuses without fear, whether families can attend synagogue without security or whether children feel safe wearing a Star of David without being suspended for anti-Palestinian racism—the latest fabricated tool to extinguish Jewish identity. When trusted institutions fuel narratives that lead to suspicion and dehumanization, they are no longer observers but have become part of the environment in which that hatred grows. The cost of getting this wrong is measured in the safety, dignity and future of Canadian Jews.

Thank you very much.

• (1125)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now turn the floor over to questions from members, starting with Mrs. Thomas for six minutes.

You have the floor.

**Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Thank you so much, and thank you to each and every one of you for being here.

My first question is for Mrs. Dickenson. CPAC went to the Board of Internal Economy, and during its time there, the following statement was made:

At a time when legacy media companies continue to cut back their news operations and increasingly substitute opinion-driven journalism for in-depth reporting, CPAC is alone among Canadian broadcasters in providing live, uncut, neutral and unfiltered coverage.

You made a distinction between opinion-driven journalism and in-depth reporting. I'm wondering if you would care to expand on that or describe what you mean by those two things today.

**Christa Dickenson:** Sure.

The media and journalistic landscape includes private broadcasters, the public broadcaster and not-for-profit organizations, and they all have different mandates. What's absolutely unique about CPAC is that instead of having a sound bite that goes into a story, you get the full coverage of the event at which the sound bite took place. That is what we mean.

For instance, above and beyond parliamentary proceedings, press conferences and sound bites, we go to events such as all political party conventions, and we will be there to cover them. Anything that's public-facing, we will cover it in its entirety.

I always think about, for instance, an example such as the Assembly of First Nations' annual general assembly. We're there for its entirety. Even APTN, which is there to provide community-based information for indigenous people and about indigenous people, will only do a news story.

This is what I mean by it.

• (1130)

**Rachael Thomas:** For further clarification, what do you mean by opinion-based journalism?

**Christa Dickenson:** Opinion-based journalism is when one continues to ask very rooted questions through one lens and with one focus versus looking at a wide array of opinions.

**Rachael Thomas:** Can you give an example of what that would look like?

**Christa Dickenson:** We see it every single day in the news that's coming to us—specifically, foreign news and the American news that is overtaking our broadcast airwaves. That's what I would look at.

**Rachael Thomas:** That's looking south of the border, but you're talking within a Canadian context and saying that there seems to be opinion-based journalism here. Would you give an example of that?

**Christa Dickenson:** I don't have a specific example that's coming to mind. I think a lot of the other broadcasters go down that road.

**Rachael Thomas:** Okay.

I can see your hesitancy to give an example. It was a phrase that was used in front of the Board of Internal Economy. Obviously, there is a distinction being drawn between what CPAC offers and what other media outlets offer. Do you not care to expand on that?

**Christa Dickenson:** At the end of the day, be it political parties or other journalists looking for the whole, unedited clip, they come to CPAC versus choosing a piece of the story. This is really and truly what I mean by that statement.

**Rachael Thomas:** All right. That's fair enough.

My next question is for Mr. Thiessen.

I'm curious about whether you could expand on the unique challenges that are faced by a local, small and independent media outlet, in particular when it comes to providing coverage that would pertain specifically to a community and making sure the diversity or voice in that area is represented.

**Jeff Thiessen:** One of the challenges is funding. To get every side of the story, it's really important that we have enough resources to get to the story. That's one of the challenges small markets have; there is always a limited pool of resources that way. Diversity is one thing that we really pride ourselves on in our organization; we try to get at all sides of the story. I appreciate some of the things that have been talked about already this morning.

Southern Alberta is unique. We talked about Lethbridge, which is a great city because it has so many diverse opinions. It's a pleasure to allow our organization and our news team to dig into a city that has a very strong university presence, as well as strong agriculture, and some from very different parts of the political spectrum. It's a great opportunity and a great ecosystem to develop journalism and make sure that the standards are well maintained.

It's a fun city to be covering.

**Rachael Thomas:** To tap further into my question, I'm curious as to why that is important. Why do you need boots on the ground in local communities?

**Jeff Thiessen:** In my speech, I talked about democracy. You have to explain what the real story is and what the heart of the story is, and this comes only from digging in and finding out what's really going on.

I'm sorry; I don't know if I'm answering your question, but I can tell you that the concern we have as a local station is that without the resources, we're just not able to cover stories the way we would like to, whether it's in the courthouse appearances or other things the community really wants to hear about, while making sure that everyone's voice can be heard.

**Rachael Thomas:** Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Thiessen.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'll turn the floor now to Mr. Al Soud for six minutes.

**Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's great to see you, as always.

It's my turn to very warmly welcome our two new committee members. I know the people of Cumberland—Colchester, as well as Terrebonne, will be very well represented over the context of all that we do here in heritage committee.

I have the privilege of representing various perspectives in this committee. I am the youngest Arab, the youngest Muslim and the first Canadian of Palestinian origin to serve in this beautiful House of Commons.

My mother's side of her family, following the 1948 Nakba, was completely pushed out to Lebanon. I say completely pushed out, but they actually had to flee. For their entire lives, members of my family have had to convince people of their story, a story that is often understood by many others, but that is refuted by so many others in other contexts. Everybody here has a story, and their stories are assumed in most contexts. My family's is not.

Countless Palestinians around the world have to convince people that the atrocities they face, that the things that they live, day in and day out, are not okay. That, in itself, is a form of anti-Palestinian racism. Hospitals have been bombed over the past few years. It's not just the past few years; it is so much beyond that. The entirety of Gaza is destroyed and, at this point, eradicated. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been murdered, yet we stand here and still have to convince and convey that it is worthy of coverage. We have to convey that it deserves to be covered by the CBC.

I will now turn to my questions, but I thought that was worth the comment, at the very least.

Mr. Rooke, you started in campus and community radio at the age of 15 when you were introduced to the CFRU at the University of Guelph. If a 15-year-old today wanted to enter radio or local journalism, would the pathway still exist in the same way?

• (1135)

**Barry Rooke:** Pathways for training from and through our radio organizations do exist for somebody who comes in, whether they're 15 or 65. Our network offers training for someone who has no knowledge. Often, people are from communities that come from outside of Canada and are settling here in Canada, bringing their own languages as well. There's often even that separation of knowledge and ability.

We are seeing a shift in the formalized structures and steps by which people go through post-secondary education. Close to two-thirds of the journalism and broadcasting schools have closed in Canada. What we've seen is an inability for people who are interested to go through training as a formalized process.

There's obviously a blend of non-profits, professional groups, mentorships and so on that are available, but that core pathway has been impacted dramatically over the last six months to a year.

**Fares Al Soud:** According to an article from BayToday earlier this month, you stated:

Yet in many of the campus and community radio stations, and especially the Indigenous ones, they're often the only source of information and news in those spaces—let alone a spot for people to share their passion and learn as an entry level into the media.

If this is the case, should they still be treated as training grounds and cultural platforms, or should they now be understood as essential local news infrastructure?

**Barry Rooke:** We've argued that it's part of a broad connection. Community radio, as a whole, has shifted more towards a community media platform. This means that, as people are entering, whether they want to do a radio show or a podcast; learn how to produce content, a web series or community events; or learn how to run an organization, the connections that these stations make spread beyond broadcasting over AM or FM, and they're usually integrated directly into the way that the organizations work.

Campus radio stations are a good example. A lot of the time, professors are working with students to learn how to do this type of media sharing of stories, as opposed to writing their fifth essay. In indigenous spaces, there are often communities in which you do not have generalized communications in some spaces. Using the airwaves is not your traditional...you turn it on; you listen to the morning show. It might only be on a couple of times throughout the week, but they're there for important information, whether it's reaching people who are out hunting and trapping or emergency services and whatnot.

The breadth of what these stations do has really expanded dramatically. Yes, the training and education is one part of it, but we're also looking at access to news. We're talking about access to advertising for local businesses, and music is still a huge portion of what we do.

• (1140)

**Fares Al Soud:** Monsieur Desjardins, I turn to you for my last question for this round.

Time and again in this committee we've heard about rapid changes in technological advancements, consumer behaviours and consumer habits. In previous studies I've made a point of highlighting the importance of future-proofing legislation, ensuring that dialogue is active and that we're engaging industry at large.

How do you find we can most effectively as a government consistently maintain these rapports with industry and make sure that they are feeding into the legislative process beyond these committees? I've heard that folks feel they come to committee every three years or so and highlight the same frustrations over again.

**Kevin Desjardins:** I would say that over the last several years we've had a good exchange with the government and members of the opposition parties in terms of conveying the challenges that our members are facing and the ways that those could be addressed.

There's another player within this with the CRTC, which implements this legislation. We've stated that we would like to see the commission both move faster and be willing to take an approach that doesn't look at chiselling regulation into granite. They should understand that with rapid changes within the media industry they need to look ahead to understand and—to use their term—make sure that they get it right. It's to be willing to come back, revisit and get it right again when they need to, as change dictates.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

I now give the floor to Mr. Champoux for six minutes.

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

I'm going to start with a comment for Ms. Dickenson. I'm very disappointed to hear that you've been forced to cut two important shows from your programming. These aren't the first cuts we've seen in the media landscape or the news industry in recent years, yet they're still just as gut-wrenching.

Earlier, you talked about opinion journalism with my Conservative colleague. I would like you to expand on this new element of the news industry that we've been seeing since the arrival of social media and these new types of journalism, if you will. As you said, we now have opinion journalism, if that can be called journalism, and commentary. I get the impression that people have trouble distinguishing between pure journalism—that is, journalism that involves researching the news and double-checking facts—and opinion journalism, commentaries and editorials. I agree, there is a place for that. I think we can make room for all these types of journalism in our ecosystem. What I'm hearing is that some people are taking advantage of this confusion in order to paint all types of journalism with the same brush so as to condemn and speak out against journalism, which they see as biased.

I'd like to hear your thoughts on that. Do we need a better definition of the types of journalism in the media outlets we turn to?

Is it okay to let people use editorials that are intertwined with serious reports, which suggests that there may be a certain journalistic bias in certain media outlets or among certain reporters? What do you think?

**Christa Dickenson:** I don't think that the issue is about labelling the types of journalism that currently exist. I think the issue is about protecting the ability to do that double-checking you talked about, whether it's for a big story, a simpler, everyday story, a podcast or whatever. You really need to have the ability to do that double-checking.

What's different about CPAC—I'm here representing CPAC, of course—is that, at the end of the day, no other institution provides all these hours in a long, unmodified format, that is, without editing or interruptions. Something I find truly incredible, and I believe I mentioned this in my speech, is the number of hours of recording that we add to our archives every day. We add 20 to 24 hours every day to our large library.

**Martin Champoux:** Yes, there's no need to revisit CPAC's mission. I'm a fan. Indeed, I think we should look at adequate funding, based on the reality of today's market. I hear you on that.

However, I really want to make a distinction between what journalism is and what opinion or commentary is, and the perception that some people have of journalism being biased. That does a disservice to the profession, in my opinion, and it serves absolutely no purpose if we want to protect what we consider to be very valuable, that is, quality journalism. We can criticize journalism, of course. We always have the right to criticize. However, there is a certain foundation to this profession, and I think we need to provide that context.

I turn my attention now to Kevin Desjardins.

You are a little bit like the icing on the cake here, because some members of your organization, the CAB, have made these types of requests to the committee. These are requests that you've echoed today, including emergency support for CAB members that benefit from the independent local news fund. You also talked about the much-touted tax credit and government advertising. These are things that we've been hearing time and again for quite a while.

You and I have been talking for several years, Mr. Desjardins. We know each other quite well. Do you think that repeating these ideas will achieve anything? I get the feeling that we're just repeating ourselves and nobody is listening.

• (1145)

**Kevin Desjardins:** I have to believe that. By pushing the rock up the hill, we have to believe that we will eventually get to the top. I think we're getting close. It's not easy to get things done in government, but they're starting to hear these issues, recognize the crisis we're in and understand what kind of support we need.

Unfortunately, we have lost stations, services, journalists and newsrooms since the first bill was introduced to modernize the Broadcasting Act, Bill C-10.

However, we're seeing progress. I'd really like us to get all the support we need. We're getting closer, but we're not ready to celebrate yet.

**Martin Champoux:** The economic update will be tabled this afternoon at around 4 o'clock. If the economic update does not include the long-overdue support measures for the news media that

we've been calling for, what will your reaction be tomorrow morning?

**Kevin Desjardins:** I fear that this will send a message to some of our members that support is not coming. I hope to see something in the update. We've been calling for this for quite some time. Both my organization and our members would really like to see at least some progress on that.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Diotte, you now have the floor for five minutes.

**Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC):** Thanks, Madam Chair.

Mr. Epstein, we've heard at this committee from a group called HonestReporting Canada, which did a study saying that CBC is biased against Israel in the broadcaster's coverage of the war in Gaza. You go further by saying that the CBC is essentially operating as a "mouthpiece...for terrorist entities". Those are strong words. Can you give examples of this?

**Amir Epstein:** Of course. It's using information provided to them by terrorists. The Hamas health ministry is Hamas. The health ministry is not operated as an independent body that is unbiased, and it is operated by Hamas. All of Gaza is operated by Hamas. When they're getting information from that part of Hamas, it is still information that's being provided by a terrorist organization, and they ignore the fact that they're getting their news information from the same people who are capable of beheading people with shovels. They are rushing to push narratives by an organization that quite literally states that they want to annihilate the only Jewish state in the world. This is how they work as a mouthpiece for terror.

**Kerry Diotte:** What have you done to try to push back against this? Have you gone to the CBC? Have you had meetings? Have you tried to make your case to the CBC?

• (1150)

**Amir Epstein:** The CBC isn't quick to return emails. They operate, and will continue to operate, in the way they do and with the language they use in refraining from using specific words. They won't say the word "terrorist" anymore. Now it's "militant".

It continues to degrade and fall into being a deeper, darker, more biased news agency. It's not getting better. It's getting worse.

**Kerry Diotte:** Why do you think this sort of treatment is a danger to Canadians?

**Amir Epstein:** It's because a lot of Canadians don't know exactly what's happening in the Middle East, just as most of us here don't know what's happening in Botswana or other countries around the world. There are many of them. There are a lot of things happening.

When people are seeing information that is specifically trying to demonize and demoralize a people who are at war for their rights and their existence, it's going to shape people's attitudes and it's going to shape people's perception. This has led to the drastic explosion of the anti-Semitism, hate and violence that we see on the streets, with restaurants and community centres being shot at.

The police have spent tens of millions of dollars trying to maintain the anti-Semitic rallies that we see, the pro-Hamas rallies that we see. This has an effect on people who are watching, as it would on anyone. If you are seeing just one narrative of "bad guy over here, good guy over here", it's going to cause anger and frustration, as it would in anyone.

This is what we're seeing from the CBC and many other news outlets. They're not reporting unbiased information. They're not reporting two sides of a story. They report one, and that's what they move forward with. That report lends itself to the vilification of the Jewish community for actions that are happening thousands of miles away.

There is no other community responsible for the actions of their foreign government. We don't see people attacking Chinese Canadians because of what China is doing. We don't see people attacking North Koreans because of their dictator. The only people in Canada who are responsible for a foreign government thousands of miles away are in the Jewish community, and we see it with the constant violence on the streets and everywhere. This is lending itself to the increase of anti-Semitism.

**Kerry Diotte:** What should be done or can be done to solve the issue?

**Amir Epstein:** A very small solution would be to stop voicing the fringe, the tiny groups that represent nobody in our community.

The far majority of Jews are Zionists. Zionism means only the belief of self-determination in our ancestral homeland. It doesn't mean anything against anyone else. It doesn't even speak to any of those things. Zionism is a part of our religion. It has been that way for thousands of years. It's in our prayers every day. When we say "*Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad*", we're talking about Israel. We're talking about the yearning to return to Jerusalem. This is not a newly fabricated thing that happened 100 years ago.

The one thing we ask is to stop voicing the opinion of a tiny scintilla of our community as representing the far majority. Start using organizations like HonestReporting if you want our position. Tafsik and B'nai Brith represent the far majority of Jews, not the small number of tokenized Jews who think they're standing for a cause when all they're really doing is providing further platforming for those who wish us harm.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Royer, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Zoe Royer (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Lib.):** Thank you.

I'd like to begin by thanking every witness for appearing today.

I'll focus my comments on Ms. Dickenson.

You wrote to me last July, and I had the opportunity to meet with CPAC last fall. I was truly thankful for that. I want to say how much I truly value CPAC's service to all Canadians. It is, as you quoted from someone who had written to you, an "indispensable service" to Canadians and journalists across our country. CPAC gives Canadians a direct window into Parliament, into our committees, into public affairs and democratic debate in English and French, often with aging equipment that is nearly impossible to replace, which you can sometimes find on eBay, and it does that on a shoestring budget that last year was \$15 million.

I also want to acknowledge the people behind that work, the journalists, producers, camera crews, editors, technicians and staff who make it all possible. I was deeply saddened to hear the news last week about the layoffs. In a small organization, I know it is felt deeply.

When CPAC has to reduce its workforce, in practical terms, what does that mean for the service Canadians receive?

• (1155)

**Christa Dickenson:** Thank you very much, Ms. Royer, for the supportive comments. They're greatly appreciated at this time or at any time, and thank you for the question as well.

You asked what it means for the service.

In order to make these decisions on where to cut, we've had to become selective in areas in which it's difficult to do. It was an informed decision. We looked at who our audience is, and we looked at the top content that's being viewed. We went back to our mission, which is one of public service. CPAC in no way, shape or form is meant to be competitive.

If there was an area of duplication, that's where we opted to trim. It was not trimming fat; it was trimming very good content. Individuals have had stellar careers and were unbelievably hard-working and dedicated, and it was in no way, shape or form a reflection of their talent or their abilities or the programming we were offering. In a time when belts need to be tightened and subscriber erosion has reached absolutely new heights, we were operating with the budgets that we had in 2006. Imagine your own salaries or the budgets you're working with being frozen for 20 years. That is CPAC's reality.

**Zoe Royer:** Let me ask you this: Imagine you're sitting in my seat and you're a policy-maker. What are some of the changes you would implement, and how would you prioritize them? Are there international best practices that you might look to in that process?

**Christa Dickenson:** It's hard to use the word "prioritize". What I would look at is the time and place.

We are seeing journalism made fragile. We've heard about radio stations being shuttered. We know of other organizations, peers that have shuttered their foreign bureaus. There comes a point at which we need to say that journalism and maintaining Canadian democracy matters above all else at this time and place, because we are living through an unbelievable amount of warfare. It's not only physical warfare but cyberwarfare. The antidote to that misinformation is information in its entirety, so making sure that we're investing in journalism in a holistic way is incredibly important.

Above and beyond that, if you start putting layers versus priorities, public service media organizations such as APTN, Accessible Media and CPAC are looking at niche audiences, niche topics and journalism all at the same time. That would be my answer.

[Translation]

**Zoe Royer:** Thank you very much.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

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

I don't know if you've seen this, but Agence France-Presse reported that the Australian government introduced a bill to implement harsher penalties for digital giants like Meta, Google and TikTok, which are a haven of fake news and disinformation, and which young people are increasingly turning to for information.

Mainstream Australian media outlets, like their Canadian counterparts, are struggling. Australia decided to step up and take action, unlike other governments that we don't need to name here. Once again, the digital giants will be required to enter into agreements with media outlets so that news content can again be available on their platforms, otherwise they would face fairly significant fines. That could go as far as having to pay the equivalent of 2.25% of their revenue in Australia, which would then be paid to news organizations and media outlets.

What are your thoughts on that, Mr. Desjardins?

I'd like to ask everyone this question, because I think everyone would like to share their opinion on this, but I only have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Desjardins, are you jealous to see Australia take such measures?

• (1200)

**Kevin Desjardins:** We just saw that this morning.

In fact, they are following the same principle we are. When a company is active in a market and earns revenue in that market, it

should give back a little of that revenue to support the media outlets that are affected by its activities.

**Martin Champoux:** Aside from financial compensation, although that's another matter on which I completely agree, do you think platforms should be required to put news content back online in order to counter this issue of disinformation, or should we at least draw inspiration from that practice here?

**Kevin Desjardins:** I sometimes hear people say that it's because of the government that news isn't on Meta's platforms. However, it's absolutely because of Meta. I think, as a citizen, that Meta should—

**Martin Champoux:** It should take responsibility.

**Kevin Desjardins:** Yes.

**Martin Champoux:** Ms. Dickenson, do you have an opinion on that?

**Christa Dickenson:** It's important for Canadian broadcasters to have a presence on digital platforms. That could look like a Canadian environment where news could be available. We also need to have the ability, at the right time, to change discoverability. These companies have the means, for sure. The media industry is in crisis. When the time comes, we have to be able to change what is considered a priority in broadcasting.

**Martin Champoux:** There should be a place for CPAC on those platforms as well.

**Christa Dickenson:** That's right. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Généreux, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—Témiscouata, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Dickenson, what is CPAC's annual budget?

**Christa Dickenson:** It's more or less \$15 million, but it's going down. Right now, we're bringing in barely \$13 million from our wholesale rate.

**Bernard Généreux:** That money comes primarily from cable companies, if I understand correctly.

**Christa Dickenson:** Yes, as well as from satellite service providers.

**Bernard Généreux:** Earlier, you said that you've had the same budget since 2006. Is that correct, or is it 2016?

**Christa Dickenson:** It has shrunk, so it is now back to what it was in 2006, because of the loss of subscribers.

**Bernard Généreux:** Okay.

So, what's the solution? You met with the members of the Board of Internal Economy the other day. Did you submit a formal request for a specific amount?

**Christa Dickenson:** For years, we've been requesting ad hoc funding in two ways.

We expect to see a more permanent and long-term solution within the next few years. This solution is the services of exceptional importance fund, which should come about as a result of Bill C-11 and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC.

In the meantime, after our cuts in 2024 and 2026, which led to a 25% reduction in our workforce in less than two years, we're asking for two solutions.

The first solution is to rebuild our infrastructure. We haven't had a chance to do this, given the administrative renewal imposed on us by the CRTC over the past three years. So we've asked for \$8 million as soon as possible to finish rebuilding our infrastructure. Ms. Royer gave examples showing that we have equipment, such as sound equipment, that simply doesn't work anymore.

On top of that—

• (1205)

**Bernard Généreux:** If you don't mind, I'll get back to my question. I don't have much time.

Did you ask the government for a specific amount of money?

**Christa Dickenson:** Yes. We asked for \$8 million for infrastructure and \$5 million a year for three years for operating expenses. This amounts to \$15 million.

**Bernard Généreux:** Okay.

Are you currently receiving public funding?

**Christa Dickenson:** We receive it for specific projects.

**Bernard Généreux:** What type of projects?

**Christa Dickenson:** We received funding for a special program on the 150th anniversary of the Supreme Court. We'll also receive \$150,000 to produce two documentaries on the restoration of the Centre Block. We also expect to receive a small amount as bridge financing for—

**Bernard Généreux:** Okay. That answers my question. I want to get to my point as quickly as possible.

I consider CPAC a public good, meaning a necessity for Canadian democracy. If your current funding comes only from cable companies, which are declining and will continue to do so, then obviously we need to find another solution to ensure that Canadians can access their democracy. This democracy is mainly here in Ottawa. You must be able to report on the conventions of each political party in a neutral manner, as you said earlier. In my opinion, this is fundamental. I believe that the country must have an independent body that promotes Canadian democracy.

You spoke about \$5 million a year for three years, as well as \$8 million to renew your equipment. You said that your current budget is \$13 million. You're asking for substantial amounts of money.

Since we know that your revenue will continue to decline, do you think that the Government of Canada should fund 100% of CPAC's activities?

**Christa Dickenson:** The model is changing. We're at an inflection point. The government should take responsibility. For example,

the funding could come from a combination of cable companies, multimedia broadcasters and the government. Each party could contribute one third of the funding to ensure the survival of this independent channel.

So, I would say yes, in part.

**Bernard Généreux:** Radio-Canada is receiving \$7 million from the journalism fund created by Bill C-11. Are you also receiving a portion of this funding?

**Christa Dickenson:** In terms of funds created by Bill C-18, we received \$359,000 for the first year and \$405,000 for the second year. So, again, we're receiving fairly small amounts.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Ntumba, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses.

I would also like to welcome our two new members, Ms. Hirtle and Ms. Auguste.

First, I would like to comment briefly on Mr. Al Soud's remarks. I wanted to echo his thoughts. He read my mind and spoke for me.

We're talking about the state of the journalism and media sectors in Canada. As a government, or as elected officials, we shouldn't try to interfere with the content discussed in newsrooms. You, the media, have the ethical and intellectual capacity to decide what you feature and what news you broadcast on your various media platforms.

I could complain that we don't talk enough about Haiti, Sudan, Chad or South Africa, which went through apartheid. However, that isn't why we're here. We're here to find out what you—Mr. Desjardins, Mr. Epstein, Mr. Thiessen, Mr. Rooke and Ms. Dickenson—think about the current state of the journalism and media sectors in Canada.

I'll start with you, Ms. Dickenson.

**Christa Dickenson:** They're tremendously weakened. We need to invest in everything from local news, to CPAC's independence, to radio. We really need to get back to the drawing board.

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba:** Mr. Epstein, what are your thoughts?

[*English*]

**Amir Epstein:** It's important to have all realms of positions. Having one very left-leaning organization—the CBC, to the tune of over \$1 billion—and no right-leaning news organization is causing a lot of problems for Canadians.

It's about having representation for both the left and the right to start, and as you said, making sure there is ethical journalism being done, because it's been lost in this country—at least for some of these news outlets.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba:** Mr. Desjardins, please go ahead.

**Kevin Desjardins:** We often talk about the need to keep journalists in newsrooms. The greater the number of journalists, the greater the number of voices, insights and opportunities for editorial mentoring. This is more likely to happen in newsrooms. I'm not saying that journalism can't take place outside newsrooms. However, in our opinion, by keeping more journalists in the newsrooms, we'll be able to answer many questions.

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba:** Mr. Rooke and Mr. Thiessen, the digital transition has made it possible for Canadian content to reach new audiences both at home and abroad. At the same time, it has had a major impact on economic models.

How do you strike a better balance when it comes to digital innovation, the discoverability of Canadian content and the financial sustainability of the media?

Let's start with you, Mr. Rooke.

[*English*]

**Barry Rooke:** A lot of our stations are in the process of doing that or are doing that naturally, because they are organizations that aren't held to somebody else looking for something from them. Often it's shareholder value or information from above, speaking to this or that.

Our network will go out and do the learning and the education to provide those opportunities for the community to share their mind. That's a really important portion of the entire process, and it helps with the entire ecosphere of the Canadian media sector, which tends to lie in its own way. The further we pull apart from what is truly Canadian and how we operate within the room or on the streets.... I think it's really important that the entire ecosphere have the supports that it needs in order to do that work.

[*Translation*]

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba:** Mr. Thiessen, would you like to comment on this?

[*English*]

**Jeff Thiessen:** I'll state, as we're talking about journalism and making sure that there is balance within the system, that newsrooms need to literally put their code of ethics, their journalism standards, in their newsroom and then evaluate those every week and make sure that they are at the forefront. Make sure that—

[*Translation*]

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba:** Sorry. I was talking about the digital transition. How do you strike a better balance when it comes to digital innovation, the discoverability of Canadian content and the financial sustainability of the media? That's my question.

[*English*]

**Jeff Thiessen:** I'm sorry. My earphones weren't working properly.

[*Translation*]

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba:** Okay.

[*English*]

**Jeff Thiessen:** If I understand, it's digital innovation.

That's one of the great democratic systems that we have now, as it allows smaller stations to do so much more with that new technology. Barry and his community stations and organizations like ours don't have huge budgets, but we do so much more and get to so many more people because of the innovation and the opportunity we have to take our message and get it out further than ever before.

Even though it's a difficult time and a lot of investment is needed in creating and taking advantage of that innovation, it allows smaller players to take the message out to our communities in a much better way. It's a very important time for us.

[*Translation*]

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba:** Thank you. Is—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Ntumba. Your time is up.

[*English*]

Mr. Waugh is next, for five minutes.

**Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair. Welcome, everyone.

I just want to say off the top that I really appreciate CPAC and, Ms. Dickenson, your fact-based reporting. I am sorry that your two flagship public affairs shows are now gone.

You mentioned Mr. Fife, and that's kind of interesting because, as you know, I'm a longtime broadcaster, and we have talked about the opinion pieces, the journalists, the commentating and the objective reporting. All Mr. Fife has done for the last year is go on these shows—CTV, CBC—ridicule my leader, Pierre Poilievre, call him names and talk about our party and how many people are moving. It's totally garbage on the air. This is where I think the public has just said, "Enough: I no longer want to watch these public affairs shows with statements like that."

I turned to The Globe and Mail the next day, and guess what: Mr. Fife has the PM giving him the lead story on the front page of Canada's national newspaper. You can see the objection from me, with 40-plus years of journalism, after seeing him ridiculing the Conservative leader and our party in the afternoon and then seeing him the next morning spewing what the Prime Minister is going to do that day.

Do you find that interesting?

• (1215)

**Christa Dickenson:** It points to the importance of having CPAC so that you can see the full picture. Above and beyond the parliamentary proceedings that are our core business, it's the wraparound materials—all the caucus ins and outs, all the press conferences.

Ad hoc press conferences are our leading content on YouTube and online. That's what people are coming to watch us for. On television, appointment viewing is question period. It isn't a selection that we have made. It really is what's there for the taking, in its entirety.

**Kevin Waugh:** To be honest, ParlVU is eating your lunch.

**Christa Dickenson:** ParlVU serves a different purpose.

Like many people in this room who speak both English and French, I love floor language. One thing is that, on CPAC, I can go from English to the original language. I can realize that I'm not on the original language and select “floor”, and then it continues. On ParlVU, it stops, and you go all the way back to the beginning.

More than anything, CPAC has a discoverability purpose and brand awareness with Canadians, with its audiences, and there's that 70,000-hour archive. Have I said it yet, a couple of times? There you go.

**Kevin Waugh:** Thank you for the word “archive”, because we are in the heritage committee, and I've seen many TV stations throw their archives in the Loraas disposal.

I talked about this with the minister during the Harper years. He had no idea when we closed Brandon. We had Lloydminster and Medicine Hat closing.

You've talked about the archives from 1977, I believe. That is our history in this country. Unfortunately, Mr. Desjardins, I think the CAB should be talking more about the archives, because I thought we had the best archives in the country at CTV. I was there for 40-plus years, and people would come to us and say, “You know, the camera was there in 1979. Do you have that touchdown?” We did, but I am worried that this government doesn't care about archives, and I have seen that.

Ms. Dickenson, you've mentioned archives. When you can do these specials, it's taking the past and putting it into the future so that other Canadians can enjoy that aspect of our country. Do you want to comment on the archives? I'm really worried about this.

**Christa Dickenson:** It's one of our gems, so we can't talk about it enough. We have 70,000 hours in the cloud, and it keeps on growing. We contribute 20 or 24 hours or more a day. I see that growing. We think it's quite special.

You're right, and I am aware of other broadcasters that have had to step away from their archives because it is a behemoth of a task, but CPAC protects ours because we see it as the democratic memory of Canada.

**Kevin Waugh:** Well, I wish you all the luck.

The service of importance fund is a new one I've heard about. What's that fund?

**The Chair:** We're out of time for this question.

**Christa Dickenson:** Someone else could pick it up.

**The Chair:** Next time you can get back to that one.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Christa Dickenson:** I'm leading the witness. I'm so sorry.

**The Chair:** Mr. Myles, you have the floor. If you wish to be led, apparently there's...

**David Myles (Fredericton—Oromocto, Lib.):** It's okay. We still have some time to get through some more questions.

Thanks, everybody.

Mr. Thiessen, it's great to have you here from MP Thomas's riding. I'm also very pleased to have Mr. Desjardins here with us today. He's from Fredericton—Oromocto, the greatest riding in Canada. It's nice to have you here.

• (1220)

**The Chair:** Are we voting on that?

**David Myles:** Yeah, can we vote on that now?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**David Myles:** Now that we have a majority, let's vote on that one.

I appreciate you all for being here.

One thing that we've all been grappling with is the future of the market, and not just the government supports. Maybe we can talk about some of the opportunities for growth from a market perspective, and not just the decline. I know that overall the market has been very tricky, and we can talk about some of those elements, but before we go into some of the funds and how they've affected you, maybe we can speak about the future of some of the market opportunities, particularly for radio. I'm curious.

Maybe we can start with Mr. Desjardins.

**Kevin Desjardins:** Thank you very much.

One thing that is always a challenge for broadcasters is.... The reach of our members is still very strong, but in fact one thing we're seeing is that while retail sales and advertising tracked very much to broadcasters for decades, in the last decade there's suddenly a gap between those.

I've had a radio operator say that 100% of vehicles have the radio app, basically, in them, and 89% of Canadians listen to the radio every week. There are a lot of apps that would kill to have that sort of penetration into the market. Radio remains very vital.

One thing I would say in terms of an important piece of innovation when it comes to news is that over the past decade, as we started to see some of the local dailies and weeklies close, a lot of radio stations took their websites and turned them from promotional websites into community news portals. A number of groups, including Arsenal in Quebec; Vista out west, primarily; and Golden West have really invested in those community news portals. They are community news portals that exist outside of the foreign digital behemoths' systems. Those who invested in their own digital properties have been able to withstand some of the challenges of news blocking and threats from outside the country.

This is one area that's very much responding to the community and finding the digital tools, as Jeff said, to innovate and serve the community better.

**David Myles:** Part of the challenge is that even when you have listeners showing up, it's hard to monetize if people aren't advertising there. Am I understanding that correctly?

**Kevin Desjardins:** Yes.

As a couple of lads from New Brunswick, probably living with-in....

My family came from Grand Falls and St. Stephen, two border towns. One thing in a border town is that if you owned a car lot in St. Stephen or Grand Falls and you advertised on the radio station just across the border in Maine, you could not claim that as a business expense, because there are rules in place that were always intended to help preserve Canadian media. When it comes to Internet-based platforms, there's a loophole, and it has not been closed. As for all of that \$11.2 billion in advertising that has left the Canadian market, this is one thing that has helped to spur it on.

It's not to say that people would stop advertising on digital platforms. It is certainly an incentive for them, because they get a business tax credit for that business expense.

**David Myles:** The money going toward the States and the larger digital platforms was the impetus for Bill C-11 and Bill C-18.

Can you talk about your support for those bills and how they've changed? If they're not quite living up to their capacity now, then where do we need to look at changing them?

• (1225)

**The Chair:** You're at five minutes. We can come back to that question.

Thank you.

**David Myles:** Okay.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

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

You know, when we start a career as a radio host or journalist, we often go through community radio. It's the natural path. It's a way to get our foot in the door and it's a wonderful experience. I followed this path the mid-1980s, with community radio and stu-

dent radio as well. Community radio is enriching and educational. A career in the community sector is a vocation.

Mr. Rooke, please describe the current state or morale of the troops in the community media sector. People must be fairly worried.

[*English*]

**Barry Rooke:** Yes, morale is low.

There are challenges, especially when we look at younger people who are trying to enter the market. As noted, the closures are not providing that formal next step. That has a profound impact on how we are all working, especially as younger people are gathering information from other spaces.

What you often see is that younger people are looking for news and information in different ways and forms, and those maybe aren't as informed, are more opinionated or are skewed toward sharing to the community that is giving them likes and thanks, as opposed to providing truth-supported information.

[*Translation*]

**Martin Champoux:** There's also community involvement. It's called community media for a reason. It's rooted in these communities.

In regions with little media diversity, what would the disappearance of a community media outlet entail? What would be the impact, aside from the news?

[*English*]

**Barry Rooke:** Some of the big things are loss of local advertising opportunities. In many communities, these are the only spaces in which a small business has the ability to share information and services being brought out from municipal governments or through provincial or federal offers. Those disappear, as people don't have access to that information as easily as possible, especially in, as you said, rural and remote communities that have low broadband connections as well.

For the music industry, in many places it's often a meeting point for communities to come together. They'll offer out spaces or opportunities for festivals or local events, and these just wouldn't happen, because there's no space for people to gather around that.

[*Translation*]

**Martin Champoux:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We go now to Mrs. Thomas for five minutes.

**Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Epstein, I'm curious about this recent data that was published within the last few days. It gives updates with regard to anti-Semitism in Canada, and according to that data, in 2025, the number of anti-Semitic incidents hit a record high, the most our country has ever seen.

Today you've given testimony to suggest that media coverage plays a role in terms of how Canadians perceive the Jewish population here in Canada and how Canadians behave towards that group of people.

I'm wondering if you can expand on the important role that media play in making sure that coverage is fair and unbiased. If that isn't the case, what are the consequences for certain groups within our population?

**Amir Epstein:** I've already mentioned the importance of presenting balanced information, information without bias. We have not seen that. We don't see it in most media outlets in this country—not CTV, not Citytv and not CP24. The list goes on and on.

CBC happens to be the big guy on campus, so when they consistently present information that is on one side of a war, it's impossible to present Canadians with the information from the other side of the war.

There's never one party in a war. When a war is started by one group against another, and then they're the ones who are vilified, it really does create a lot of animosity.

The thing that's strange—and I've mentioned this—is that the Jewish people in Canada are somehow responsible for what happens with Israel and Gaza, Israel and Hezbollah and Lebanon, Israel and the Houthis in Yemen, and it continues on and on and on.

Israel is never presented as defending itself, which it has on every single front. It didn't start a war with Lebanon. Hezbollah was rocketing Israel with tens of thousands of rockets. Israel responded. The CBC presents it as Israel attacking Lebanon. The Houthis in Yemen launch missiles at Israel. It has nothing to do with Israel. Israel responds, and now Israel is attacking Yemen.

Hamas, of course, started a war on October 7. They started a war. They came in and they slaughtered 1,200 people. Before Israel even lifted a finger, there were news outlets.... There was one article that I wish I had in front of me. Before Israel had responded, it talked about the concern for Palestinians. There wasn't even a discussion about what had happened and the fact that they had started a war.

When it's presented in this way, we see constant vilification of one group. We see constant praise—maybe not praise, but apathy, towards another. That doesn't mean there shouldn't be, but it needs to be presented without bias. Because of the way we see schools, universities, professors and of course media outlets presenting information that is not complete or true in many cases.... We see what happened. You mentioned a 700% increase.

The Jewish community is targeted more than any other ethnic community in Canada—more than anyone—so we have to ask why. Why did that happen suddenly, right after October 7, and the entire world decided it was okay? We can see the influence of extremism in the media, and I mentioned mainstream schools and universities. This continues, so the suffering will continue and the hostility will continue.

I can tell you that the Jewish community is speaking very seriously about leaving Canada. Most Canadians don't even know this. We, Tafsik, have started a plan B initiative.

• (1230)

**Rachael Thomas:** If I may—

**Amir Epstein:** If we're not going to be safe in Canada, we don't need to remain in Canada.

**Rachael Thomas:** Thank you.

How does the media ensure that its coverage is fair and unbiased?

**Amir Epstein:** It can do so by using sources that are not linked to biased terrorist organizations and biased Jew-hating organizations, as well as by using information that's being presented by more than one side. Israel presents a lot of information. They do a lot of investigations. They present the information that CBC does not present—or that it does present with the words twisted in a way that somehow still vilifies the Jewish community and Israel.

The voice of the Palestinian people is represented very well by CBC. We have no opposition to that, but we wish that the Jewish and the Israeli positions would also be represented equally. That would give people two sides of a story so that they could say, “they were right here, but they were wrong there”, instead of saying, “they're always right, and they're always wrong.” That's how animosity towards my community continues to grow in this country.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Myles, you have the floor for five minutes.

**David Myles:** Thank you very much.

I would love to continue this line of questioning, but unfortunately, I'm going to switch it up because I would be remiss if I didn't talk about community and campus radio stations across Canada.

I was a musician for 20 years. I saw how important these stations were, in terms of often being the first to take a risk and play music that wasn't played on other stations. Stations like CJSW in Calgary, CJSR in Edmonton, CHSR in Fredericton, CKDU in Halifax and CIBL in Montreal are amazing stations and have a role, particularly for emerging artists in Canada.

You often exceed CanCon regulations. How do you promote that? How does that become part of your mandate across the country? How do you fit into the larger ecosystem, particularly when we talk about arts, culture and the musical community in Canada?

**Barry Rooke:** It's a starting point for many people. It's also an ending point for a lot of people. You end up with musicians who have retired, and then they come back to host a radio show in their retirement because they love showcasing content. It happens a lot within our sector.

We're the space in which people get their first opportunity to be played on the air. People, not algorithms, are creating an experience that you get to have. The popular content being played on our stations—reggae, blues and jazz—is rarely heard on more commercial radio stations because there's either no capacity for it or no ability to monetize it.

It provides a broad space in which those communities, specifically artists, have a spot to come in and make a local connection, play a local gig, bring communities together around it and continue to grow. It is still very much a starting point, as you said, in many spots, yes. Hopefully, they can transition to generating higher revenue because royalties on radio are not what they used to be. If that's what you're looking for, that's fantastic.

We also have artists who love to release their new albums for their local radio station. They want to provide that community story for those individuals.

• (1235)

**David Myles:** What is the listenership trend across community stations in the country over the years, especially when they come up against streaming and other ways people listen to music?

**Barry Rooke:** As I mentioned, we have a number of groups trying to launch stations. The numbers have grown since we started to do stats. We've seen a doubling in listenership since pre-COVID. This is often due to access to news and new information. Also, people don't want the algorithm to pick what they want to hear. They want something that's curated, local, something that speaks to them. We're seeing a lot more of it.

The trust in what happens in community radio is often a lot higher. Our colleagues in Quebec put out a review a year or two ago. It showed that they were the most trusted news and media source across the country. I'm happy to submit that information for the report as well. It speaks to the fact that, if you talk to someone across the street or in the grocery store, they're looking to share their stories, and it becomes that community element.

**David Myles:** Your ask to government is slightly different from those of some of these other funds. Why are these other funds that some of the other broadcasters are accessing not available to you? Specifically, why do you have a different ask?

**Barry Rooke:** There is no core and stable funding for our sector. CBC receives what they do. That's great. There are tax services and supports for some of the commercial broadcasters. We know that those aren't working as well. Also, there is no advertising that really comes through from the federal side of things.

The bit of support and the programs that come through our sector right now are often tied to something very specific. The local journalism initiative is the non-profit and community media opportunity that Canadian Heritage offers to hire a journalist in a news desert to make an opportunity for them to report on it. That's available to print, TV and community radio. That's not a service that's available to the commercial broadcasters.

Some of the funds that we are hoping for—the same with the commercial broadcasters—are tied up in court cases that are still holding on from decisions that were made three years ago.

**David Myles:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We're going to move into our fourth round, starting with Mrs. Thomas for five minutes.

**Rachael Thomas:** Thank you.

Again, thank you to our witnesses for being here.

Unfortunately, I have to take a slight deviation and turn my attention to some committee business. Given the protocols of the House of Commons, this is the opportunity to do that, and I apologize to the witnesses.

First off, I have a clarifying question for the clerk.

We've just received notification that the minister is no longer coming on Tuesday, May 5, but rather is coming on Thursday, May 7. I want to confirm that this is in fact the case.

**The Chair:** That is the information we got from the clerk today. Also, I will add that he's coming on the main estimates and will appear later for this study.

**Rachael Thomas:** Thank you. I appreciate that. That was going to be my second question.

Do we have confirmation from the minister that he will in fact appear with regard to the study on fairness in the media?

**The Chair:** Yes. We don't have a date, but he has indicated that he will appear in May or June on this study.

**Rachael Thomas:** Okay. I'll just voice my concern there. This study is coming to a close fairly soon. As a part of the motion, the minister has been requested to come.

The longer we wait, the longer it will take us to close out this study and draft the report. Of course, it would be preferable for the minister to come for sure by the end of May, if at all possible. I realize that those at this table don't control the minister's schedule, but I just want to convey the importance of that.

Thank you.

At this time, I wish to move a motion. It has been sent out to all the members of this committee. The motion reads as follows:

That the committee undertake a study of no less than seven (7) meetings on the distribution, impact, and efficiency of Department of Heritage Funding;

That the committee invite the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture to testify before the committee in relation to the study for no less than two (2) hours individually; and

That the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

I would move this motion for discussion at this point in time.

• (1240)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Myles.

**David Myles:** To speak to that motion for a moment.... I'm aware of the fact that we have witnesses here.

I'm happy to chat about it. The idea of asking the minister to come for another two hours is.... I mean, he might as well set up a little permanent seat if he's coming for four hours in the next little while. It's a bit ridiculous.

Anyway, I'm happy to discuss this, but I don't think this is the time to discuss it. We have a meeting on Tuesday in which we're talking about committee business. I'd be happy to speak about it then.

I would move to adjourn the debate.

**The Chair:** That is a dilatory motion. We need to vote on it before I take more speakers.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** Debate on that motion is adjourned.

You still have time for questions, and you still have the floor, Mrs. Thomas.

**Rachael Thomas:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I seek to move another motion that is currently tabled and, therefore, before everyone in this committee. I move:

That the committee undertake a study of no less than six (6) meetings on the effect of construction and expropriations related to the Alto High Speed Rail project and their impact on natural, cultural, and historical sites;

That the committee give priority to this study upon the conclusion of the study agreed to by the committee on Tuesday, January 27, 2026;

That the committee invite the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture, the Minister of Transport, and the Minister of Environment, Climate Change, and Nature to testify before the committee in relation to the study for no less than two (2) hours each individually; and

That the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

Madam Chair, I would add two notes that I think are worth attention. In both of these motions, it has been acknowledged that the study we're currently doing takes precedence in terms of wrapping it up. There's another study that we have a gentleman's agreement to undertake next, which has been put forward by the Liberal Party. I am not asking that the studies in these motions take place this spring. In fact, they probably wouldn't take place until September or October.

As for Mr. Myles' point, the minister wouldn't need to camp out here. It's quite okay. He wouldn't be asked to come until October, so he would have plenty of time to prepare and plenty of opportunity to rest over the summer before we would ask him to appear.

I want to make sure this is clear. I'm not asking that these take precedence over the motions that are currently agreed to for studies, but I am asking that they be considered for study following the ones we currently have agreed to on the agenda.

**The Chair:** Okay. We have notices of these motions. I'm not certain that this last one is relevant to this committee.

I have Mr. Champoux on the speaking list next.

[*Translation*]

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

First, yesterday in the House, we saw the government party's use of its newly acquired majority. It was a denial of democracy to impose in this manner a topic that could have been explored through constructive discussions. This government has boasted of wanting to work constructively and collaboratively with the opposition parties. However, yesterday, we saw the opposite.

Today, our committee has new members as a result of yesterday's vote in the House. The Liberals' first move when we table a motion is to adjourn the debate. Adjourning the debate is also a denial of democracy. It prevents parliamentarians from debating a topic that, in my opinion, is in no way divisive. It falls completely in line with the committee's work. I'm referring to the previous motion tabled by Mrs. Thomas. It would have been perfectly reasonable to discuss this matter. Mrs. Thomas would have had time to explain that we weren't in a hurry and that her motion could have been studied in the fall, for example. There wasn't any time frame set out in the motion. Yet the Liberals' first response was to adjourn the debate on the motion.

If this is what the future holds with the committee's new composition, I'm extremely disappointed. I've been on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for seven years. It has been extremely tense. Mrs. Thomas can attest to this. We've been on opposite sides of many issues. However, for quite some time now, we've been working well together. This is helping to move things forward. When it comes to media and culture, we often have extremely different opinions. Yet we always find a way to hear from people who want to share their views with the committee.

It saddens me greatly now to see that the Liberals plan to take this path. They want to control the narrative, control the debate and control the topics. If this is where we're headed, the opposition members won't be alone in their disappointment. The sectors that we advocate for and represent will also be disappointed. We're already starting to hear this. I'm already having conversations with people who wonder whether things will be like this all the time. They aren't necessarily satisfied with all the government's efforts. They want the opposition parties to have their voices heard.

Colleagues, I think that it's fine for you to enjoy your new monarchy in parliamentary committees. However, remember that we serve the public. The conversations proposed by the opposition parties often come from a place of goodwill and relevance. I would hate to see the tone change here.

With regard to the first motion, I completely agreed with Mrs. Thomas.

The motion before us is indeed related to today's topic. The high-speed rail project will affect the cultural sectors of the regions concerned. I think that it's entirely appropriate to discuss this motion and to consider carrying out a study on the matter. Not only is it timely and relevant, but some people in these sectors are extremely concerned. I'm talking in particular about cultural sector workers, arts presenters and cultural venue owners. They feel threatened. They want us to hear their voices and listen to their concerns.

I would like to ask my colleague, Mr. Myles, to reconsider this strategy of adjourning the debate on motions tabled by the opposition. He should consider the fact that the committee could carry out this study a bit later in the fall, for example, or as soon as we have the opportunity.

I needed to put this on the table and point out that we're used to working together, especially in this committee.

Thank you.

• (1245)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Go on, Mr. Myles.

[*Translation*]

**David Myles:** I completely agree. I'm so glad that we're working together. I think that we've done well so far.

I said that we had witnesses here today and that we had a chance to ask them questions. We also have a meeting scheduled for Tuesday to discuss committee business. Hence my comment that it was worth adjourning the debate for now. We can discuss the matter on Tuesday.

I completely agree. I hope that we can continue to work together. As you well know, I also like to work this way.

However, we have witnesses here right now and we're having an important discussion. Hence my proposal to adjourn the debate on this motion. We can continue the debate on Tuesday.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay. Call the vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mrs. Thomas.

**Rachael Thomas:** Thank you.

Given that Tuesday is a business meeting and that we received notice of this literally less than an hour ago, I'm wondering if the chair would agree to provide us with an agenda for that meeting so that we know what we're stepping into, rather than coming into it blind.

**The Chair:** There is no agenda at this point, but we can provide one before Tuesday. I'll work with the clerk.

**Rachael Thomas:** I'm sorry. I always get a little panicked when I hear that a meeting is being called but there's no agenda. Is there a purpose for this meeting?

• (1250)

**The Chair:** I don't have an agenda, but yes. It's about future business. It's an open table about what we will study and what our schedule will look like going forward at this committee.

**Rachael Thomas:** As it has been agreed at this table, generally, there's a working group that gets together and makes that decision. It's composed of three members of Parliament, with one from each party. I'm curious why that practice is not being engaged in and, instead, the entire committee is being invited to the table.

**The Chair:** We could do it either way. If the committee would prefer to have just a subcommittee meeting....

Go ahead, Mr. Champoux.

[*Translation*]

**Martin Champoux:** Madam Chair, the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure typically meets to discuss a proposed agenda for future business and then submits the proposal to the rest of the committee. The committee then makes a decision and votes on the proposal. The committee normally and traditionally takes this approach. I think that this is the right way to proceed.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We've done it both ways. We have started with a subcommittee and we've taken the whole committee together in a business meeting. If members prefer to have just a subcommittee meeting on Tuesday, I'm okay with that.

Are there any other thoughts?

Go ahead, Mr. Al Soud.

**Fares Al Soud:** Chair, I'm amenable to either option. I think everyone on this side is as well. If a subcommittee is preferred, that's perfectly fine, but I think it's important that we, as a committee, come together and have open discussions on what we want to discuss as business.

Everyone has put forward motions. Everyone has priorities. Everyone cares about different things. I find that when we have these conversations as a group, together, with everyone at the table, that tone of collaboration is struck completely differently. If a subcommittee meeting's what we'd like, then I'm perfectly comfortable with that. A more open, candid discussion among all members of this committee, together, would probably be more productive and to the benefit of Canadians.

**The Chair:** That's how we made it work before, but I'm open to making it a subcommittee-only meeting. Do we need to revise the membership of the subcommittee group now that we have different membership in the entire committee? It's not as though we're voting.

Go on, Mr. Champoux.

[*Translation*]

**Martin Champoux:** No. The custom is to have one representative per party. Usually, it's the vice-chairs of the committee, the chair or a representative of the government party. It isn't proportional. However, as Mr. Al Soud said earlier, the subcommittee's decisions aren't final. The decisions are subsequently discussed in the committee. This just simplifies the discussion. Each party comes with a summary of its organization's expectations, which we discuss in the subcommittee. I think that this is the most efficient approach.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Ntumba.

[*Translation*]

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba:** Madam Chair, I just want to point out that we have witnesses here. We should have finished asking them our questions in order to at least complete this part of the study. As Mr. Myles said, the committee can look at the motion again next Tuesday. The discussion could also take place in the subcommittee. That way, we can finish asking the witnesses our questions if my colleagues have any left. The responses from the experts here with us could then provide further input into the study.

I'm not sure what you think.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Let's deal with what is at hand. We can change Tuesday's meeting to a subcommittee meeting if that's what members prefer. I'm fine with that. Do we need two hours for a subcommittee meeting?

Please go on, Mr. Champoux.

[*Translation*]

**Martin Champoux:** It's hard to predict. Usually, one hour is enough. That said, we already have two hours of committee time scheduled, so I would keep those two hours. At worst, we'll use only half the time. That's all.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** If we schedule the first hour with the subcommittee and the second hour with the committee as a whole to discuss what the subcommittee has decided—everybody comes in for the second hour—does that work?

**Rachael Thomas:** We can try it.

**The Chair:** I will have the clerk revise the invitation for Tuesday. We'll do one hour of subcommittee meeting and then one hour in camera so that the entire committee can discuss. Okay, that sounds good.

I don't believe we have more time for witness discussions today. Thank you all for your input and for your time. If there's anything you didn't manage to get on the record, please send us your thoughts through the clerk, and we can include them in our analysis and our final study on this topic.

Thank you, everyone, for your time.

The meeting is adjourned.







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