



A great thank-you to the organizers for all the work in putting this event together and in bringing all of us together.

Canadian Media Guild

- **We are 6,000 media workers**
- **Quality media system that serves all Canadians**
- **Healthy organizations that treat workers fairly**
- **20-year anniversary in 2014**

- ✓ The Canadian Media Guild/ la Guilde canadienne des médias (CMG/la Guilde) is a union of media workers. Our members work in various workplaces including CBC, TVO, TFO, APTN, Private Radio, Shaw Media, ZoomerMedia, Canadian Press, Thomson Reuters.
- ✓ I thought it would be good to contribute the perspective from the field - Different from a legal or academic perspective, a sense of how some of the issues considered at this event are experienced on the ground.

Consumers vs Citizens

- Focus on “consumers” leads to focus on price
 - ❖ e.g., Let’s Talk TV
- What if the focus is on Canadians as “Citizens”
 - ❖ Would there be a stronger emphasis on the public interest

It’s interesting to look at the use of “consumers” versus “citizens” by the CRTC. There seems to be an move from “citizens “ toward “consumers” - Something worth looking into in more detail.

What has changed?

But for example, in the March 19, 2015 announcement about the recent Let`s Talk TV hearing decision, the CRTC mentioned “consumers” three times and “citizens” once.

What are the outcomes of looking at Canadians that way?

Here is one quote from that announcement:

“Canadian Consumers also expressed frustration that the basic packages offered by cable and satellite had become too large and costly”

One might wonder then, what would “Canadian Citizens” express frustration about?
– Would “citizens” perhaps express frustration about lack of Canadian content for instance?

Example 1 – Local programming

- Over 80% of Canadians say local programming is important
- CRTC recognizes local programming is in jeopardy
- CRTC cancels Local Programming Improvement Fund and offers no new supports
- CRTC's promise to address CBC local programming funding not honoured
- CMG has proposed CRTC establish a Public Service Media Fund

“The Commission defines local programming as programming produced by local stations with local personnel or programming produced by locally based independent producers that reflect the particular needs and interests of the market’s residents”
Broadcasting decision CRTC 2013-263-CBC Licence renewals

*81% told the CRTC that local news – a huge part of what CBC/Radio-Canada delivers – is important (CRTC – Let’s Talk TV)

*88% say the CBC plays an important role in strengthening Canadian culture and identity (Nanos 2014)

*87% would like to see CBC’s funding increased or maintained

Yet

In 2012, CRTC cancelled the Local Programming Improvement Fund even as it recognized the LPIF had assisted local television stations in maintaining and enhancing local programming in non-metropolitan areas.

In 2013, the CRTC then failed to address local programming funding with CBC’s licence renewals as it had promised in 2012

With Let’s Talk TV decision, the CRTC chastised major broadcasters for not funding local programming – but failed to do anything as a result of the hearing to address the issue

CMG had proposed a Public Service Media Fund during Let`s Talk TV consultation

Example 2 – Saint John radio

- **MBS-owned local radio stations in Saint John, NB**
- **Owners required to meet the needs and interests of local communities**
- **MBS has no local newsgathering resources in Saint John**
- **“Local” news produced in small newsroom in Halifax**
- **Broadcast system creating a type of ATM for license holders**

- ✓ **CMG filed a submission with the CRTC urging the Commission to require Halifax-based MBS Radio to improve local programming, including news in Saint John, NB as a condition of renewing the licences for Big John and CFBC**
- ✓ **CMG members had been on strike fighting for the survival of local radio that serves the interests of the local community on public airwaves**
- ✓ **CMG asked the CRTC to require MBS to establish newsgathering resources in Saint John, improve local programming to reflect the local community and enhance the diversity of editorial voices and improve the quality of local programming to serve interests of the community**
- ✓ **Commercial Radio Policy 2006 requires licence holders to show the service meets the particular needs and interests of their local communities**
- ✓ **MBS had had no local newsgathering resources in Saint John for 4 years**
- ✓ **DJs in Saint John were asked to pass on information to the small newsroom in Halifax if anything happened**
- ✓ **CMG had found MBS takes \$1 million in revenue back to Halifax from its**

stations in Saint John

Example 3 – CBC Governance

- **Board and CEO appointed by PMO - Currently 100% Conservative donors and activists**
- **Government measure to interfere in day-to-day operations at CBC now law**
- **Standing Committee of Canadian Heritage raised CBC governance issue in 2007**

Board and CEO appointed by PMO – currently 100% Conservative donors and activists
The issue of a more objective way to select CBC Board and CEO was raised at the 2007-2008 hearing of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage
Proposals to fix the problem had included a mechanism to select from a prepared list of eminent Canadians (committee to come up with criteria and guidelines)

Government measure to interfere in day-to-day operations at CBC now law
Proposals to fix
CRTC has not addressed this issue

Example 4 – CBC’s role in our broadcast system

- **No discussion of CBC at Let’s Talk TV**
- **Challenges faced by CBC currently being discussed by Senate Committee**
- **Where does the buck stop?**

No discussion of CBC at Let’s Talk TV – incomprehensible given this was a review of our broadcasting system and given the major role the CBC plays in it! Although many Canadians raised this problem, the CRTC did nothing to address it.

Here is the CRTC in 1987

“The Commission reiterates its view that the role of the CBC has become pivotal for the distinctiveness of the system, and even more essential than it was previously now that there is such an abundance of viewing choices”

CRTC-87-140, February 1987

Given the dizzying amount of choices available now, this would mean CBC is even more important in 2015 than it was in 1987 wouldn’t it? So what gives?

Good questions

- 1
 - ❖ How do we make sure that the balance in the *Broadcasting Act* is a reality?
- 2
 - ❖ Is the CRTC as responsive to the public interest as it is to PMO pressure?
- 3
 - ❖ What does effectiveness look like for the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage?

These examples show that there are occasions and tools for the CRTC to act in the interest of things that are recognized to be in the public interest – where it does not.

The CMG believes that the CRTC could act effectively within the current *Broadcasting Act* to enhance our broadcasting system.

Therefore we do not believe there is a need to open up the *Broadcasting Act*.

Quotes:

“The television regulatory framework can continue to adapt to accommodate change, while still ensuring that core objectives of the *Broadcasting Act* are met.”

Peter Miller

Environmental Scan

Let`s Talk TV, 2014

“Because we don’t have decades!”

A CMG member at CBC

Let me leave you with some questions that I hope will be helpful as we think through how to fix some of these major issues