



**Canadian Media Guild**

**La Guilde canadienne des médias**

CWA/SCA CANADA

**CMG Presentation  
to the  
Senate Transportation and Communications Committee  
reviewing the challenges faced by CBC**

October 8, 2014

**Funding an Independent CBC/Radio-Canada**

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**[Carmel Smyth]**

Good evening Mr. Chair, members of the committee, Clerk and staff. Bonjour tout le monde. Thank you for this opportunity to appear.

My name is Carmel Smyth and I am the National President of the Canadian Media Guild (CMG). With me are Marc-Philippe Laurin, President of CMG at CBC/Radio-Canada and Jeanne d'Arc Umurungi, CMG's Communications Director.

CMG is a union representing 6,000 media workers at media outlets both public and private organizations.

These are the people who bring Canadians the news, and create original Canadian content every day.

**We agree with UNESCO's definition of public broadcasting. To quote:**

**UNESCO's definition of public broadcasting:**

*"Neither commercial nor State-controlled, public broadcasting's only raison d'être is public service. It is the public's broadcasting organization; it speaks to everyone as a citizen. Public broadcasters encourage access to and participation in public life. They develop knowledge, broaden horizons and enable people to better understand themselves by better understanding the world and others.*

*Public broadcasting is defined as a meeting place where all citizens are welcome and considered equals. It is an information and education tool, accessible to all and meant for all, whatever their social or economic status. Its mandate is not restricted to information and cultural development — public broadcasting must also appeal to the imagination, and entertain. But it does so with a concern for quality that distinguishes it from commercial broadcasting.*

*Because it is not subject to the dictates of profitability, public broadcasting must be daring, innovative, and take risks. And when it succeeds in developing outstanding genres or ideas, it can impose its high standards and set the tone for other broadcasters. For some, such as British author Anthony Smith, writing about the British Broadcasting Corporation — seen by many as the cradle of public broadcasting — it is so important that it has "probably been the greatest of the instruments of social democracy of the century."*

Because our national broadcaster's role in the media landscape is unique, CBC/Radio-Canada needs enough funding to support its mandate, and a strong arm's-length relationship with government.

The *Canadian Broadcasting Act* states that the national public broadcaster's programming should be predominantly and distinctively Canadian.

And it is:

- CBC has 94% Canadian content between 8 to 10 p.m. Versus the major private broadcasters at 0 to 8%. Plus service across the country in both official languages.

Only the public broadcaster is required to do this. This is its promise to Canadians. And it costs money.

[Marc-Philippe Laurin]

Avec ces définitions, passons maintenant en termes concrets à ce que fait CBC/Radio-Canada Afin de tenir ses promesses envers les Canadiens.

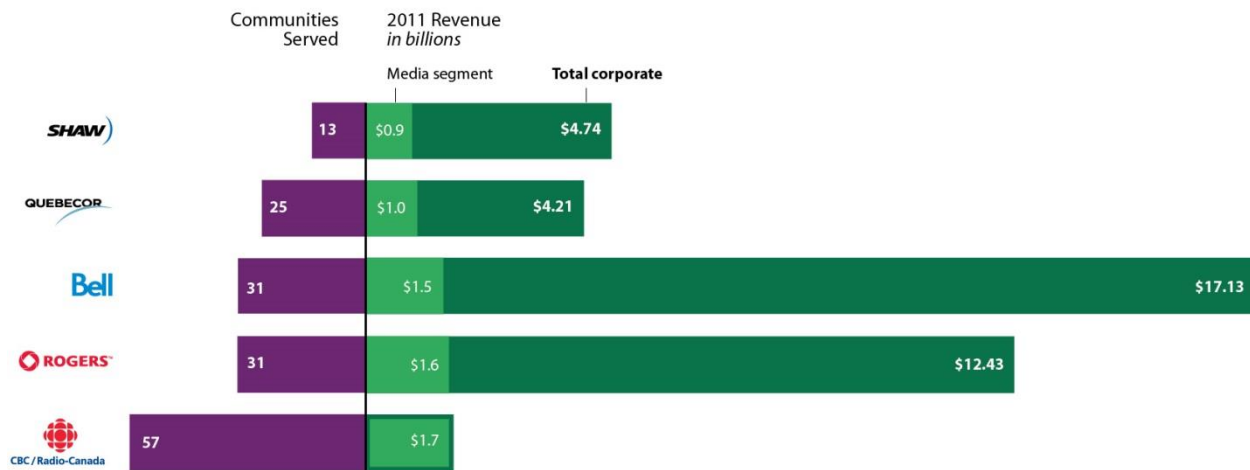
### **D'abord – CBC/Radio-Canada est une importante ressource culturelle au pays**

- Le diffuseur public est présent dans les petites et grandes communautés, partout au pays, offrant des services dans les deux langues officielles and en 8 langues autochtones, toujours avec l'intérêt public au premier plan.
- Il raconte les histoires canadiennes et nous rapporte les nouvelles du monde d'une perspective canadienne

C'est ce qui fait du diffuseur public national une précieuse ressource avec 78 ans d'histoire.

- CBC/Radio-Canada est le plus grand service de nouvelles au pays sur toutes les plateformes. Aucun autre diffuseur majeur privé n'a cette portée nationale. Aucun d'eux ne se situe dans le Nord.
- CBC/Radio-Canada serves communities in 6 time zones, with 88 radio stations and 27 television stations; 10 all-digital services, and 5 specialty television services including ICI RDI and CBC News Network.
- CBC is present in 54 communities --- The 2011 chart we have provided shows that the large private companies are only present in 13 to-31 communities in the country.

## # OF COMMUNITIES SERVED WITH DAILY LOCAL PROGRAMMING VS. REVENUE



Sources: Corporate financial reports for 2011, CMG

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The goals of CBC (or any other public broadcaster) and those of private broadcasters are as different as night and day. The privates seek audiences for profit, CBC pursues audiences to inform, enlighten and entertain. It's an important difference that is too often missed.

Al Johnson, a former CBC President (1970s) described the national public broadcaster this way: "equal time for Canada" – This is the role CBC plays in our lives as citizens, not just consumers.

### **Second – CBC is a major source of reliable information for Canadians**

One aspect of the public broadcaster's role is to inform Canadians on what's going on, including actions of the powerful and influential, regardless of political affiliations. In our document, we list a sampling of significant stories CBC/Radio-Canada uncovered in recent years.

#### ***Par exemple, la corruption dans l'industrie de la construction au Québec***

##### **RBC using temporary foreign workers to replace IT workers in Canada:**

CBC first broke the story of RBC whistleblower Dave Moreau and shone a light on the growing dependence of Canadian employers, including major banks, on temporary work visas that provide workers with little protection from abuse.

Link to story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2013/04/05/bc-rbc-foreign-workers.html>

##### **Diluted chemotherapy drugs were given to 1,200 cancer patients in Ontario and New Brunswick:**

CBC investigated how it was possible for diluted drugs to end up in hospitals. As a result, an Ontario legislative committee is looking into the apparent lack of oversight and standards for companies that supply these drugs.

Link to story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2013/04/12/chemotherapy-dilution.html>

##### **450 Canadians among those named in leaked data on international use of tax havens**

CBC is the Canadian partner on an international investigation into leaked information about the use of havens by more than 100,000 people and companies around the world to avoid paying taxes. The government is now creating a “SWAT Team” to crack down on tax evaders.

Link to story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2013/04/03/offshore-data-leak.html>

#### **Conservative cabinet minister resigns seat after reports of illegal campaign contributions in 2011:**

CBC first reported on his campaign expenses. Link to story:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2013/03/15/pol-penashue-28-ineligible-donations.html>

#### **Rate my hospital:**

The CBC report card on 239 Canadian healthcare facilities has generated much public discussion about how to make our hospitals safer.

Link to story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/features/ratemyhospital/> .

#### **CBC reveals Canadian links to bombing at Algerian gas plant**

Link to story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2013/04/01/f-algeria-canadians-militants-hostages.html>

#### **Donations to Alberta Tories linked to changes to labour code:**

Emails obtained by CBC reveal that construction companies tied their donations to changes to labour laws that would make it more difficult for unions to operate.

Link to story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/story/2013/04/24/edmonton-investigative-election-promises.html> .

#### **Boeing Super-Hornet is a much cheaper alternative to F-35 fighter jets**

CBC reports on a plane that is reported to be just as good as the famous F-35 fighter jet, but half the cost.

Link to story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2013/02/27/pol-fighter-jets-boeing-superhornet-f-35-milewski.html?autoplay=true>

#### **Award-winning series shines light on Canada’s asbestos mining industry:**

The series won a Michener award for meritorious public service journalism in 2012. In its wake, Quebec rejected a proposal to re-open a Quebec asbestos mine, Ottawa withdrew opposition to putting warnings on asbestos exports and Saskatchewan created an asbestos registry for government buildings.

Link to story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2011/06/12/f-backgrounder-asbestos.html>

### **Third – CBC/Radio-Canada is a vital economic asset**

- Another substantial contribution - in addition to its value as the major cultural institution in Canada – is CBC/Radio-Canada’s vital contribution to a healthy media industry. A 2011 Deloitte study showed that **CBC contributes \$3.7 billion to the Canadian economy**; a substantial return for a public investment of **\$1.1 billion**. The study cites CBC's contributions to local economies, a vibrant production sector, creative clusters and competitiveness. The research also highlights CBC's role as an innovator and pioneer in new technologies.

[Carmel Smyth]

And here is what Canadians have to say about the role of CBC in our lives:

- ❖ In 2009 (Pollara), 83% of Canadian say the CBC is important in protecting Canada's identity and culture; this year (Nano, 2014), 88% say the CBC plays an important role in strengthening Canadian culture and identity. This perception has increased in intensity over the last year – from 53% in 2013 (Nanos) who agree with this statement to 70% (Nanos) in 2014. The continuous cuts are worrying Canadians, leaving them with a sense that the national broadcaster is being weakened
- ❖ 81% say the CBC helps distinguish Canada from the United States (Pollara 2009)
- ❖ More than 90% of Canadians who took part in the Reimagine CBC survey (2012) say they value and strongly support the network's courageous reporting; over 83% of participants say they appreciate the Canadian perspective provided by CBC.
- ❖ 81% of Canadians recently told the CRTC that local news – a huge part of what CBC/Radio-Canada delivers – is important.
- ❖ 87% of Canadians said they would like to see CBC's funding increased or maintained (Nanos 2014).

**[Jeanne d'Arc Umurungi]**

### So what about the challenges facing the national public broadcaster?

Since 2008, over 2100 jobs have been cut with another 1500, and possibly more, to be cut over the next five years. The harmful impacts include:

- Watering down news reporting and decreased capacity for investigative journalism
- Diminishing local programming across the country
- Shrinking local newscasts
- Damaging a critical cultural incubator
- Abandoning sports

*Clearly, CBC is being forced to cut its services.*

To quote *Deputy Grand Chief at Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Alvin Fiddler:*

*“For years, CBC was a 'lifeline' for remote and isolated First Nations, and despite advances in technology that still holds true today. While fair and unbiased in their coverage, our local station, through programs such as Voyage North, has given more attention to Aboriginal issues than most other media. I would expect Canada's national broadcaster to promote that as opposed to cutting it.”*

Voyage North is no longer on the air, and 25 other communities and regions are suffering reduced services as a result of these cuts:

- St. John's
- Northern Ontario
- Labrador City
- Winnipeg
- Grand Falls
- Regina
- Cape Breton
- Calgary
- Fredericton
- Edmonton
- Halifax
- Vancouver
- Charlottetown
- Whitehorse
- Ottawa
- Yellowknife
- Toronto
- Iqaluit
- London, ON
- Inuvik
- Windsor
- Kuujjuaq
- Thunder Bay
- Rankin Inlet
- Sudbury

Other services being cut include investigative journalism, documentaries and long-form journalism, the hallmarks of public broadcasting.

**A sobering statistic:** with an additional 1,500 jobs cut to come – possibly the biggest layoffs of content creators and journalists in Canadian history – there is no doubt that CBC is being made to further reduce its services to Canadians.

And citizens have already been protesting, rallies have been held in communities across Canada, letters to the editors written and petitions signed – all expressing concern about the dismantling of their national public broadcaster.

### **[Carmel Smyth]**

In closing, the ongoing cuts in funding and endless debate over providing adequate funding for CBC/Radio-Canada is killing the national public broadcaster. CBC needs stable, long-term

funding in order to serve Canadians well. You can help make that happen. We urge you to consider these five recommendations:

1. **Reverse the \$115-million Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP) cut to the CBC**
2. **Increase CBC funding to about half the average of what other developed countries invest in their public broadcaster. We suggest \$43.50 per capita annually, phased in over several years** – that’s adjusting the appropriation.
3. **Require the CRTC to establish a Fund that is dedicated to public service media programming** – including local news.

**On governance:**

4. **Repeal Clause 17 of omnibus budget bill C-60** – to remove any notion of government’s interference in CBC’s day-to-day news operations.
5. **Protect CBC/Radio-Canada’s independence** by instituting a non-partisan public process for selecting the President and Board.

To end, a quote from respected professor Wade Rowland:

*“The public broadcaster is not a business in any conventional sense. It exists not to make money or to satisfy financial goals, but to fill a public need (...) The CBC is a public good, like the school system, like medicare, like our universities and colleges, our public museums and galleries.”*

Wade Rowland, Author