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Monday, December 4, 2006

—
Chair

Mr. Gary Schellenberger

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•(1535)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)): I'm going to call the meeting to order, this being the 26th meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), a follow-up of the Canadian feature film industry study.

We have with us today Jean-François Bernier and Jean-Pierre Gauthier.

Welcome, gentlemen. I know you have a small presentation, Jean-François. Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Bernier (Director General, Cultural Industries, Department of Canadian Heritage): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The purpose of our presentation is to provide committee members with an update on the actions taken by the department since the tabling of the government's response to the Advisory Committee's report on feature film. We have handed out a copy of our presentation.

I would ask you to turn to page 3, which gives some background to committee members who might be less familiar with the Canadian Feature Film Policy, which the committee reviewed last year.

In 2000, there was the launch of the new Feature Film Policy, which was evaluated by the department in 2005. Shortly thereafter, the standing committee, in the previous Parliament, tabled its report on the evaluation of the policy. In June 2006, the standing committee retabled its report and requested a government response. At the end of September 2006—about two months ago—the government then responded to the committee's report.

The government indicated that it had two primary objectives for feature film, i.e., to reach larger audiences and ensure efficient, transparent and responsible use of public funds.

I do not want to go into all the items contained in the government's response. However, I do want to highlight the two primary themes of the response.

The first theme involves enhancing the Canadian Feature Film Policy, and the second consists in aligning the audiovisual policy tool kit.

One of the key elements of the government's response with regard to the first theme, which is to enhance the Canadian Feature Film

Policy, was to recognize for the first time—and I do want to underscore this because it is quite important for feature film—that there would be tailored approaches and strategies specific to each of Canada's two language markets. This is something the government has recognized from the outset in its response.

The second element in enhancing the Canadian Feature Film Policy is to improve the performance measurement of the various components in the integrated feature film policy.

Later in our presentation, we will address a series of recommendations that basically deal with the second theme, that is how to improve and better align the audiovisual policy tool kit.

The government tabled its response at the end of September. Some 60 days later, the department acted on certain commitments. After giving you a few details, I will answer your questions.

We have an action plan for a number of commitments. I would also like to draw to your attention that the follow-up to modernize our Canadian Feature Film Policy can be found in the department's Report on Plans and Priorities.

[*English*]

On page 5 we have “Enhancing the Canadian Feature Film Policy”. As I mentioned, the government announced for the first time that there will be two distinct approaches to Canada's two film markets. So we're working at developing long-term solutions to increase the diversity of financing sources for feature films. Last October—and I think you were privy to a presentation by Telefilm last week—Telefilm made some technical changes to the Feature Film Fund, and those changes are in fact developing along these main thrusts of different strategies for different linguistic markets.

On enhancing the Canadian feature film policy, the committee had raised, and our own evaluation had raised, that we need to refine our targets and our indicators in line with the different approaches. In the past we had one national objective, which was the 5% objective for feature film. Now we're working on trying to develop a specific target for French language feature films and a specific target for English language feature films.

On page 6, we heard the committee looked at our evaluation and the government agreed that indeed there was more to measuring success in the feature film industry than the pure box office indicators. We are working on developing targets and indicators in the emerging markets, DVDs and pay-per-view, and at what the new technologies are going to allow us for feature films in the future. The challenge here is to find valid and reliable sources of data to be able to make complete and in-depth analyses of the various markets in the feature film life cycle.

We are also working on performance targets for all parts of the feature film policy. In particular, in the area of professional development and preservation, we had objectives, but our targets were not as clear as we would have liked. We're going to be working on that in the next few months. In fact, we've started a working group with our partners to establish exactly what the targets and performance indicators are in that sector.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

In the area of training and professional development, in addition to establishing performance indicators, we will conduct an evaluation of our training assistance program by next fall.

Finally, the committee had issued recommendations concerning long form documentaries. The government indicated that, in fact, long form documentaries should qualified just like all feature films under the Canada Feature Film Fund. It is up to Telefilm to determine the most appropriate way to integrate long form documentaries into the Canada Feature Film Fund.

[*English*]

The second broad theme was aligning the audiovisual policy tool kit. There are a few elements here that I would like to bring your attention to.

The department is working on the centralization of the certification of Canadian content. This is included in the reports on plans and priorities of the department. We are well advanced with that project. Our reports on plans and priorities also indicate that we are working at reviewing and modernizing the Telefilm Canada Act and the National Film Act.

Finally, we are developing a new framework in the area of international audiovisual co-productions. We have treaties with many countries around the world, and we need to strengthen the framework under which those treaties are being considered and are operating.

And finally, but not least, the Canadian film or video production tax credit, the tax credit for certified production, which was announced in 1995, will be the subject of an evaluation. In fact, we are about to post on the website of the department, through the MERX system, a request for proposals to proceed with the evaluation of that very important tool in the tool kit.

The committee will know that the government has asked the CRTC to report on the impacts of technological changes on the Canadian broadcasting system, so the CRTC is to report back to the Governor in Council on the 14th of December. You may have seen

on the nightly news that the CRTC has indeed started hearings on the over-the-air television policy. They started that last week.

Mr. Chair, I didn't want to take too much time on the presentation. We would be happy to answer any questions the committee members might have.

• (1545)

The Chair: Okay. We'll go to questions.

Mr. Bélanger.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Thank, Mr. Chairman.

Before asking questions of our two witnesses, I would like to raise two small items, in the interest of committee members. If these are not relevant, I am sure that you will call me to order.

First of all, the clerk sent us notifications of appointment that we must confirm or reject within a given timeframe. Might I suggest that when we receive notifications of appointment, we also receive the individual's resume? That way we could avoid duplicating steps and make it easier to decide whether or not we want to meet those people.

[*English*]

The Chair: I was talking to the clerk, and he said there might be a little delay, but yes, it could be done.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

The second point, Mr. Chairman, is vis-à-vis the hearings we will be starting on Wednesday. I don't know what the will of the committee might be, and I don't know if it's appropriate to bring this up at this point, or when it would be if not now, but would it be appropriate for those hearings on the court challenges program to be televised on Wednesday and the days after?

The Chair: This is just my particular view of that, but the other two instances in which they have come to committee—the court challenges have been brought to two other committees—I don't think were televised. I've always been of the understanding that when a minister appears at meetings, those are televised.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I would express the wish that they be televised, Mr. Chairman. I've been around long enough to know that it's not only when ministers come forward; it is when the will of the committee is expressed by a majority of the membership or unanimously that we seek the ability and the room necessary or have whatever equipment is necessary installed in the room. So perhaps you could canvass the committee membership to see if there is a majority or a consensus even. Since we've agreed to hear witnesses on both sides, in reaction to or in support of the government's proposal, we might even have a consensus, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Okay.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I understand it's not particular to this.

The Chair: It's not particular to this right now.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: But given that it's Wednesday, we'll have to dispose of it before such time.

The Chair: I would suggest that everyone take it under advisement right now, until the end of the meeting, and we'll see where we go. But we have our witnesses here right now.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: My understanding is that you are currently working on these issues. Could you give me an idea of your timeframe, that is to say when you expect to arrive at quite substantive conclusions and be in a position to make recommendations?

I must say that this is not clear to me. That might be my fault, in which case I apologize. How many groups are working on setting a policy, and when do you think the work will be completed?

• (1550)

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: In response to your first question, I would say that we are working on it. Regarding your second question, with regard to our timeframes, I would like to indicate that we are working on a number of files. For example, the tax credit program is not being reviewed by a committee: we have tasked a consultant to do the work on the ground. That will take some time, but we expect it to last eight to ten months.

The same applies to the evaluation of the National Training Program. This program review is not being conducted by any committee. We will have to see when we can bring all these files together. For example, we are conducting analysis to modernize the Telefilm Canada Act and legislation governing the National Film Board. We will submit proposals to the minister as soon as we receive them. We expect that to be done within the next year. It will be up to the minister to decide whether to hold consultations of not or adopt this package.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Can you tell me how many files are currently in progress?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: One the files deals with international co-productions.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is that being done by a consultant?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: No, the work is being done internally.

We are also working on an evaluation of the tax credit program.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is a consultant responsible for that?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Indeed.

Work is also being done to modernize legislation governing Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is that being done internally, or by a consultant?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: That is being done internally.

Work is also being done on centralization and certification of Canadian content. That is being done internally, together with federal audiovisual partners. Those partners include the CRTC, Telefilm Canada, several departments and the Canadian Television Fund. The fund is not a federal agency, but it nevertheless is an active partner.

That amounts to four or five files.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: That was the fourth.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: In addition to that, the minister is meeting with feature film industry representatives. We are currently working on that internally, in cooperation with external partners.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is that the minister's file? Is she responsible for that?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: She is dealing with it, but we do advise her. For example, on December 14th, she will meet with various film industry representatives, here, in Ottawa. Telefilm Canada officials no doubt spoke to you about their two linguistic working groups.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you

We have to move on to Mr. Kotto.

I'm sure you'll have another chance.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Well, if you say so, Mr. Chairman. I'll take you at your word.

[Translation]

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome.

In recent years, the mandate of Telefilm Canada has expanded, particularly with regard to multimedia, but the amounts allocated to the Crown corporation have remained the same. At the same time, production costs continue to increase year after year.

Does the Department of Canadian Heritage believe that it is important to provide the Quebec and Canadian film industry with adequate support? In other words, does Canadian Heritage believe that it is important to increase funding to Telefilm Canada, which is the lead agency for this sector?

• (1555)

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: You said you wanted to ask several questions.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Very well, I will move on.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: If I may, I can answer that question.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Go ahead.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The answer is quite simple. Yes, the department believes it is important to fund Canadian feature films. Nowhere did we indicate, whether in the government's response or during our current activities, that the government was withdrawing its support from feature films. That goes for both Quebec and Canada as a whole.

New media is another sector of sorts. One of my colleagues is working in that area. A program assessment was done, and recommendations on how to deal with new media will be sent to the minister.

Mr. Maka Kotto: For the first time in five years, box office receipts from Quebec films will decrease this year, despite the fact that *Bon Cop, Bad Cop* set new box office records. There are concerns that as of next year, theatre admissions for Quebec films, at least market share, will drop to 10%.

In your opinion, what are the reasons for such a drop?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier (Director, Film and Video Policy and Programs, Department of Canadian Heritage): There are several reasons for that. First of all, the level of funding by Telefilm Canada to support film has remained unchanged since the policy was implemented. What we are seeing, in fact, is an increase in the size of production budgets. At the outset, Telefilm Canada provided 25% of production budget funding. And yet, that proportion has increased. It now amounts to 35%, however production budgets have also increased.

The primary effect of this is that Telefilm cannot fund as many films. An assessment of the industry shows that box office success is more dependent on the number of films than the size of budgets. Film market share is much more dependent on the number of films shown on movie screens. Consequently, the reduction in the number of films has probably led to a drop in the number of moviegoers, in the case of Quebec films.

However, we do always have to put things into perspective. This is a volatile industry. Success at the movie theatre cannot be predicted. There will be some very good years, such as 2005, when records will be broken, but there will also be years with somewhat more modest success, when market share will be around 20%, as was the case this year and in 2004. We need to take a step back to determine whether this is a trend or not.

Mr. Maka Kotto: You have just answered another question that I was going to ask you, that is whether Telefilm Canada's Feature Film Fund was sufficient or not. Clearly, it is not.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: In my view, we can make do with the amounts we currently have.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Despite demand, success, costs—

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: You have to recall that current funding has allowed us to meet the objective of 27% in 2005. There will be a margin. Could additional funding make a difference? Of course. However, in the past five years, the amounts available to us have allowed us to further the policy's objectives. It is with this in mind that we want to continue doing our work.

Mr. Maka Kotto: I understand the constraints you have to deal with in carrying out your functions, but I will still ask you the following question. Given what happened over the summer and Quebec's ambitions for the future, does the federal government's film funding contribute to the development or the decline of Quebec film?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: For me, federal funding most certainly contributes to the development of film, whether in Quebec or Canada as a whole. The funding is crucial and much appreciated. The fact that people want more of it shows how important it is. I therefore believe that the role played by Telefilm Canada and the federal policy are positive elements.

• (1600)

Mr. Maka Kotto: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Angus, please.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you.

One of the issues that came up consistently during our feature film study was the need for a competitive tax environment, because now we see our competitors actually taking the Canadian model and reworking it. We're also dealing with numerous provincial tax incentives. It's all over the map. There's the federal issue. Then we're going up against U.S. and state competition, and it is clearly targeted that they don't want the production here. They want it moved stateside.

What's the turnaround time on a recommendation to actually see a response from your department, to be given to the minister, and then from there, what kind of turnaround would we see in terms of timelines for actually setting a new policy?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: This is not a question specifically related to tax incentives.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Well, you have a consultant in now to look at the tax credit. Right?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: How long will that take? Will you be looking at the environments that we're going up against and what's feasible?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: As to that particular evaluation, in our tool kit we have two tax credit programs, one for certified production and one for the other type of production, foreign productions being shown in Canada. The need to be competitive on a worldwide scale is mostly related to attracting foreign-location shooting. Our evaluation will not be targeted at that program. It's going to be targeted at the tax credit program for certified production only.

I cannot tell you exactly. First, we need to have this evaluation come in, and we need to look at options. There's no question in my mind that after ten or eleven years of existence, a program has to be evaluated. So this is its intended purpose. It's a little difficult for me to tell you, because once we receive the evaluation—and we'll look at the recommendation, of course—and we do a management response, that might lead to a decision that the tax credit program is obsolete, or the money is all going to the banks, or it's not meeting its intended purposes. So there's an area of possibility here, and there is also the Department of Finance involved in this. It's not just for our minister.

Mr. Charlie Angus: So it will not likely be within the next year and a half.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I wouldn't say "not likely", but that's probably the horizon you're looking at.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay. Just quickly to follow up on that, why not look at the competition for the foreign tax credit?

We had an amazing amount of business come into Canada up until about 2000, and then due to a number of factors we saw an incredible decline. But industrially, we had massive punching power, and it was helping build a domestic industry, because we had the U. S. productions and foreign productions helping to pay for and create an environment where we could.... So why not look at that?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: To look at the competitiveness argument, you have to also go back, and when you do, you see that for a long time, Canada, with the tax incentive we had in support of foreign productions coming here to shoot their films, was pretty much alone. What we've seen in the late 1990s and early 2000s was a lot of countries basically copying what we're doing here, so it created some alternatives for the various projects that were looking for locations in which to shoot. I don't think we're necessarily not competitive anymore. I think we still have a very strong sector that has a lot of activity. It fluctuates from year to year for all kinds of reasons, ranging from the exchange rate to labour negotiations in the States, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Charlie Angus: But you're not studying it.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: In 2005 we did study what happened during the summer of 2004 and why we had somewhat of a big downfall. We looked at all the factors that contributed, trying to find out if there was a way to actually make a change or proceed with improvement at that time.

At that time several provinces basically stood up to the plate and increased their respective provincial rates. The federal government had done so the year before that, when we moved it up from 11% to 16%.

I think what you've seen is attention being paid. I don't know if it's the design of the tax incentive itself that requires attention as opposed to just looking around to see what the initial dynamic at play is internationally. At some point it is a joint responsibility with the Department of Finance, because as a tax incentive it belongs as part of the fiscal policy framework as much as with the cultural policy framework. And we have to take into account various competing policy objectives here—the fiscal ones, the cultural ones—to try to reconcile everything.

We still have a tax incentive that is very much praised by industry, which I would submit is still very effective.

There are other ways to increase our competitiveness, including collaboration among various provinces, and we see that, for example, in major film festivals. In Cannes you have events where all the provinces gather to sponsor a session, whether it be a breakfast or a time during the day where they invite all prospective producers to come and browse around the various programs by the various provinces and so on.

So there is a lot of room I think where you can try to work on increasing the competitiveness of that sector of our individual industry.

•(1605)

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would like to hammer the point home again, because to me there would be—

The Chair: Mr. Angus, keep it short, please.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'll keep it short, yes.

To me, there is a big difference between holding a breakfast and ensuring that we don't have massive fluctuations like we had through the first half of the decade. There could be a lot of reasons for that, but how do you chart why those reasons are occurring so that you know we're not left out of the loop if New England is suddenly a lot

more competitive than we are and there's a two-year or a three-year delay before we actually realize that? How do you track that, and how do you make decisions on whether or not we're still in the game?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: Tracking does take place by basically collecting related statistics on the industry, so that is pretty much an end. But you're right, there is a gap between when things happen and when we collect data, and that happens across the whole country. It's us, it's the provinces. There is always a lag time by the time you are actually in a position to confirm what took place as opposed to speaking of projects that may or may not materialize.

So some tracking is taking place, and it's not three or four years out of date, but I would say there is probably a six-month gap. We have the final statistics probably around January for whatever happened the summer before. That is already a tool we have to see how we're doing.

Again, the factors that are brought to bear in terms of influencing the level of activities are many, and I don't think it is just a matter of playing around with the tax credit itself that will be a solution to fluctuations.

In a highly competitive environment, where we're competing with many jurisdictions, starting with individual states in the United States, and with countries, whether it be in eastern Europe or whether it be in Australia or other countries, it is going to be a bit of a push and pull game, where we're trying to improve over last year and trying to maintain our position. So I suspect we'll see some fluctuations from year to year. I think it's part of the environment, very much so.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I would like to conclude on a positive note. Two or three weeks ago, la Société générale de financement du Québec announced that they would be investing in a slate of 12 feature films to be shot in Canada. So there is always the other side of the coin as well where activity is being announced and is happening.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Fast.

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As you know, last week Mr. Wayne Clarkson appeared before us from Telefilm Canada.

As you know, Telefilm has been the subject of some criticism over the last year or so. Some of the criticism is directed at the fact that the films that are being funded aren't being watched, the subject material of some of these films is something that to most Canadians appears to be unattractive, and to most Canadians it's obvious the subject material isn't something they'd be interested in watching.

There was also criticism from the producers themselves as to how funding is delivered, something they referred to as envelope funding, which Mr. Clarkson confirmed is still presently used to fund films.

I'd like to get your assessment of this envelope funding that is used to provide incentives to filmmakers to make sure they make films that appeal to a broader audience.

•(1610)

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: Yes, definitely. As a starting point, and I think Mr. Clarkson mentioned it as well when this topic was discussed, I don't think there are any good indicators of how successful a film will be until it's actually presented in theatres. As a matter of fact, that's true even before it's actually finished and you can see it out of the can and on the screen and say, is that going to work or not?

Even in the United States, the vast majority of productions don't do very well. It's a matter of a small number in the United States, if we take that model, which is very successful by some measures, that become blockbusters and basically save the day for all of them.

Canada is no different, and we can say the same thing about many of the other countries around the world. So I'd like to caution us; there's nobody who can predict if a film, especially on paper, is actually going to be successful or not.

Some people say it's a prototype industry. Every time you build something, it's the first time you build it, so is it going to work or not? It's always difficult to tell. Some people have a better track record, and that's what the envelopes are trying to encourage. Those who have found good recipes in the past and have known success are considered and deemed to be more able to find it again. That's why we build the envelope around people's track records in actually making films that work.

It is also true that we are making some films that might not be to the taste of the majority of people, but I would also suggest that a lot of the films that are made are actually quite good. I agree that there are still not many, but having seen quite a few myself, they're actually not bad at all.

One thing that everybody agrees on is the need to promote them better. Promotion is key. Certain people start to talk about the star system at that point, in order to see that promotion is part of what you put forward to market your film.

Mr. Ed Fast: Quebec has a star system, which Canada does not in the same way, probably due to the fact that we're competing with a much larger star system from the country to the south of us. Is that correct?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: Yes, there's a retention issue in English Canada, where many of the most talented of our people decide to move their careers south of the border. But still there are quite a few very solid creators who decide to stay in this country.

There is going to be a lot of work to do to build up that promotion train you need to back up your releases. The industry agrees and sees that as well. It won't happen overnight. We'll need to be patient and work hard at it. There will be good years and not so good years in doing so. Therefore, promotion is definitely one of the key things.

At the other end of the spectrum, one could also suggest that we need to put even more effort into developing the films, making sure the script is punchy and has the right story lines, and then rework them over and over again.

Hearing Mr. Tierney speaking about his film, *Bon Cop, Bad Cop*, he said that it takes about six different writings of the script before he gets something that he feels he can start to work on shooting. That

requires a lot of support, because you don't earn any money while you develop something as a producer.

We have to be quite effective at supporting this phase, giving them the time to properly develop and develop one better. So you see, developing better films and then promoting them better are probably the two areas where we need to work most in the English market in Canada.

Mr. Ed Fast: Let's talk about the marketing. You've identified this as a weakness. How do you propose we better market these films? There has to be a strategy in place. Is that strategy going to come from you? Is it going to be coming from Telefilm? Is it going to be coming from the CTF or the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund? Where's the direction going to come from?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: Honestly, I don't think it's necessarily the role of government to start marketing films. I'm not even sure it would be a proper role for Telefilm, as a crown corporation, to start marketing films either. Films are property that belong to private sector companies. I think it's up to them to find their markets. What we need to do is make sure we provide the proper incentives and supports as they try to do that, and try to see if we can then provide some incentives for doing it better.

With respect to Telefilm, for example, when we design access to the distribution policy, one of the requirements, just to give you an example, is that to be eligible to be considered for funding, a film needs to have a commitment by a distributor to distribute the film. Now, that needs to be reinforced; that may need to be done in different ways to be more effective, but these are little things we can do to incentivize better marketing and better releases as much as we can.

Obviously, Telefilm does not only look at having distributors committed to distributing the film, but also what type of marketing plan they're proposing. The whole industry has to learn how to market the films better, how to release them better. Looking at examples around the world, starting with the success we have in the French market in the province of Quebec, for one, but also elsewhere—how can we better accomplish that? That's part of the work taking place around Telefilm Canada that struck those working groups, which gather together all of the industry around the same table, from the creators—that is, the actors, the writers, and so on and so forth—to the actual movie theatre owners. I participate in these meetings. That's the kind of question we're trying to answer during these meetings, how to market better. Quite frankly, successes we've seen this summer in the English market, such as *Bon Cop, Bad Cop* and *Trailer Park Boys*.... Are they actually going to help?

If you go back to what we've seen in Quebec, a lot happened around *Les Boys* that became an awakening point, where an interest started to take hold in the marketplace on the French side.

Have we reached that point yet with these two films? I don't know. I can't tell you yet. We'll see in a few years' time, I suppose, when we see the trends, but we need to keep working at it. Eventually, many of the films that are made—and many of them are quite good. I think there's a lot of potential. It's just trying to break into the marketplace.

•(1615)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Bélanger.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We will continue with the list of files, see how the work is being conducted and then, deal with the respective timeframes.

There is the co-production file, which is being done internally, the evaluation of tax credits for consultants, the legislative modernization of Telefilm and the NFB, the work that is being done internally on the certification of Canadian content, work that is being done internally with the CRTC, Telefilm and the Canadian Television Fund and the feature film file, which the minister is overseeing with the help of department officials.

Are there other issues being addressed?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: As indicated in the presentation, we are also working on performance indicators. You will find that on page 6. We are currently trying to find appropriate market indicators and targets that are not box offices related.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is this work being done by experts from the department, Telefilm and Library and Archives Canada?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: No, that is only for the preservation component. We have a policy to preserve Canadian feature films. How can we evaluate that policy? How do we know if we are preserving Canadian feature films? Our objective was established, but we did not have any performance targets to measure it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: When you talk about preserving films, I imagine that you are trying to ensure that they do not deteriorate.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: That is correct.

That is why we are working on this with Telefilm and Library and Archives Canada. We want to determine the appropriate performance indicators in this regard.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You are working on preservation, but are you also working on developing performance indicators with respect to preservation?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: I would like to take a few steps back and try to clarify things. If that works, then fine. If not, let us know, and we will try to better explain the issue.

Basically, we have five priorities, which have been set out. I believe you have drawn up a list: tax credits, centralization, co-production, NFB films and feature films.

•(1620)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Those are the five priorities.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The following ones are not priorities.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: No. We received two reports on feature films, one submitted by this committee, containing a series of recommendations, and the other, our own evaluation report, which also includes a series of recommendations. We analyzed all the recommendations and established a what- to- do- list to ensure a proper follow up of feature film policy. We calculated that...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So, there are sub-priorities.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: Yes, if you will. Within the feature film file, we want to improve means of measuring performance. We concluded that box office receipts were very satisfactory. We had reached our 5% target, things were going quite well on that front. Furthermore, targets had perhaps not been as clearly established in other sectors.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I have to speed up, because I am running out of time. Training and professional development as well as long form documentaries are secondary priorities. Is that correct?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes. The long form documentaries are [Inaudible]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: That is a sub-priority. For each of those files, what are the timeframes?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: You will find the timeframes for the five priorities in the Report on plans and priorities.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Excellent. Thank you. With regard to feature films, that is included in the 2006-2007 Report on plans and priorities.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: If I read it right, you're talking here about the fall of 2007, under training and professional development.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The evaluation will be received in the fall of 2007.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: In that case, it's not in the 2006-2007 plans and priorities.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The deadlines are spread out over three years. The Report on Plans and Priorities is spread out over a period of three years.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Here's what I'm getting at: Can we expect something in the next budget or are all of the plans for later?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: It depends on the minister's reaction to our recommendations.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Okay. I respect that. I'm not setting a trap for you. Does the department plan to recommend concrete action to the minister, with the necessary funding, before the end of the current fiscal year, with a view to the next budget? Is that part of the department's plans?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: When you say the next budget, do you mean budget 2007?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: For fiscal year 2007-2008.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: That's right. I will answer your question with a hopefully.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So the recommendations on training or whatever else would come in time to be included in the budget.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes, in theory.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Malo.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon. I'd like to come back to something my colleague from Saint-Lambert raised when he spoke a little earlier this afternoon. He told you that a coalition of people in film from Quebec came this summer to meet with the minister about the financial crisis that is rocking the film community and asked her for another \$20 million. The answer from the minister was, as you know, no.

Do you know why Canadian Heritage decided that day to say no to Quebec filmmakers?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I'd like to make two points. First, the report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage mentioned that the system was adequately funded and that it was more an issue of funding allocation. In its response, the government agreed with that committee finding and that the sources of funding for the feature film industry would have to be diversified.

Our policy on the Council of Heritage Organizations in Ottawa, or CHOO, and the tax credit program may provide for diversified funding other than through an injection of new money into Telefilm Canada.

Second, the federal government isn't the only source of funding. The Government of Quebec has in fact invested another \$10 million, but just for this year. They also mandated Mr. Macerola to report to Ms. Beauchamp, the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications, on a series of innovative measures with no cost consequences for the Quebec treasury.

It's a matter of diversifying funding sources. I'm not saying we'll have an answer overnight. Jean-Pierre spoke earlier about increasing production budgets. We are studying various options, and you had the government's response on September 29.

• (1625)

Mr. Luc Malo: You said the committee had tabled a report. I'd like to remind you that the Bloc Québécois presented a dissenting report.

You did well to point out that the Government of Quebec decided this summer to listen to people from the film industry by granting them another \$10 million in special assistance, which the Government of Canada refused to do.

Given that refusal, that lack of interest from the federal government, the Government of Quebec, which doesn't have the huge budget surpluses of the Government of Canada, ends up always having to make agonizing choices over funding allocation.

Isn't it about time the federal government forked over to Quebec the funding it had earmarked for Quebec and gave Quebec full control over its film industry?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I do understand your question, Mr. Chairman, but I'd prefer not to answer it.

[English]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I have a point of order.

The Chair: On a point of order.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I would hope we make sure that our questions are appropriate. Monsieur Malo is asking for a political decision, which we cannot possibly ask of departmental officials.

The Chair: Okay. I will say that I was doing some business and I missed the question.

Yes. We don't ask political questions of our witnesses here today.

Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Malo: Indeed—

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I did understand your question; it was perfectly clear.

Mr. Luc Malo: Thank you. Indeed, perhaps the government will decide to answer it at some point.

As you know, Quebec film and Canadian film have to develop all across the country. Does the new Canadian Feature Film Policy contain anything to encourage regional film production not just in Quebec, of course, but also throughout all regions of Canada?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: The Feature Film Policy, as implemented in the year 2000, federally, has mainly to do with finding an audience, that is to say that to some extent, projects are chosen based on their merit, their ability to attract an audience. I don't think there are any other criteria, such as regional representativeness. In fact, the best project is the winner. They are all regional projects; the main selection criterion is the ability to draw an audience.

Some features of the Feature Film Policy could lend themselves to that. I know that our Telefilm colleagues—I believe Mr. Pradier explained this when he appeared last week—are making an effort to come up with initiatives aimed at, perhaps, with first works or in the selection process, recognizing a place for regional productions produced in a region, in one province or another, by a minority language group or someone else.

So an effort is definitely being made, but let's not forget that the main goal of the Canadian Feature Film Policy is to draw an audience. So the films best suited to reaching that goal have to be selected.

• (1630)

Mr. Luc Malo: You know that in Quebec, there is a tax credit for film productions produced outside the major centres. Are you in favour of a similar tax credit from the federal government?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: That's one of the items of interest to us in our evaluation of the federal tax credit program. In fact, the provincial tax credit has a number of advantages, including a regional bonus. So there's an added 2% when a production is produced regionally. The federal tax credit, as it stands, has just one rate, which applies without any bonus. So the evaluations have to take that into account.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much for coming in today and sharing with us the information about film being produced here in Canada. We appreciate it.

I would just like to follow up a little bit with regard to the Canadian film and video production tax credit. I'm wondering if you could explain to me the criteria that's required in order to receive that tax credit—just the Coles Notes version of the stipulations on what qualifies for that tax credit.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: The key parameter to satisfy to be eligible for the Canadian production tax credit is to be certified as a Canadian production. To do that you have to apply to a unit in the department called CAVCO. That certifies whether or not it's Canadian. It's based on the key creative positions. We've listed the eight key creative positions and we gave them a score each. Two of them actually have two points, out of a total score of ten. So for a production to be certified, we ask for a score of six out of ten, with some qualifiers, some constraints. We also require a production to spend 75% of its production budget on Canadians and 75% of its post-production budget in Canada. Those are some of the key tests we use to certify something as Canadian content.

The producer and distributor need to be Canadian as well, Canadian-owned and -controlled companies.

When that's satisfied, they can include a claim for the tax credit in their income tax return.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Okay. So the Department of Heritage wouldn't be involved in any other tax credit for any production that wouldn't qualify under those stipulations. Is that correct?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: We do administer the other tax credit, but in an arrangement with CRA to assess their claim in terms of the service production tax credit. But again, the same kind of scheme appears. When the file is vetted at our offices, it goes to—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: What are the stipulations for that particular tax credit?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Essentially, to be a feature film it has to be over ninety minutes, and there's also a threshold in terms of the minimum budget for feature films. If it's a TV production, there's a minimum threshold for the budget.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: So anybody could come into Canada and then produce, as long as they're within that stipulation.

I just want to carry on with what Mr. Angus was talking about before, because I think the intent of what he was getting at is that if we could just increase the amount that's produced domestically, that would lead to good things happening here in Canada. I'm actually a believer that if we had a bigger industry here in Canada, we'd have more Canadian content, inevitably, being produced. I'm hopeful that we can look down the road at how we can increase production domestically.

You talked about 2004 being a critical year. You looked into the situation, maybe some of the factors that led to the decline of domestic production in that year. I'm wondering if you could just talk about some of the factors you identified.

You mentioned that maybe tax credits weren't the only reason. What are some of the other factors you identified?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: Most definitely the key factor that we found out, and that was already common knowledge in industry, was the exchange rate, Canadian currency against American dollars. That was when we saw the Canadian dollar climb back up against the American dollar.

From a Hollywood perspective, they crunch numbers to see what their best deal would be in terms of where to go and shoot. This made a significant difference in that it made a lot of productions think twice about shooting here.

•(1635)

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I think it was pretty well during the same timeframe that the governor in California started to aggressively attack the Canadian industry. I'm wondering if there was anything they implemented that adversely affected this as well.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: Mr. Schwarzenegger was elected as governor around that time, but he didn't implement anything after that. I think the budget concerns in California didn't allow him to do so. Other states actually did. In the United States, for example, with increased competitiveness from those other centres, New York actually did play a role.

The big push to repatriate—from their perspective, anyway—the productions in California was in motion before Mr. Schwarzenegger became the governor. It's been around for a few years. There was actually a proceeding that some lobby group had undertaken under the NAFTA agreement that actually ended up going nowhere.

So there have been a lot of attempts and a lot of concerns from some sectors, especially in California, to try to get productions back.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: But bringing it back to domestic reasons, as far as you can tell or as far as your studies have indicated, it was the exchange value.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: It was one of the key factors, for sure.

Actually, we did produce a report out of that study. If you're interested, I would be glad to share it with the committee. You can review the various parameters and what we found out when we asked everybody in research why we saw that decrease in the summer of 2004.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: That would be fantastic.

Do I have a few seconds left?

The Chair: One short question.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Sure.

Some of the producers or the other people we've talked to have indicated that it's difficult dealing with the federal government when there are pockets of money in different places. Producers have to shop around a little to see where they can find the money.

Is there any hope or any intent of possibly streamlining the system so that different funds might communicate better with one another?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: I think so. One of the key priorities we're talking about is centralization. For example, have one place to get your Canadian content certificate. We mention it for tax credit purposes, but the CRTC, for broadcast purposes, has some procedures as well to certify Canadian content in different productions. That's an example of where we can make some movement.

As well, when we look at the mandates of Telefilm and the National Film Board, part of the thinking is that we want to make sure we use these as good opportunities to streamline as much as possible. Telefilm internally has a lot of control over the various programs they have in place. I know they're listening very closely to industry as well to see how they could streamline and make things more effective.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: This is a terrible, terrible thing I'm going to do here, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to take advantage of the presence of the people who know the industry well to help me with my Christmas shopping.

Is there a place where one can get—this will show you how old my equipment is, and I'm talking about the electronic one—in either VHS or DVD format—

• (1640)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Or eight-track?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: No, Charlie, those I'm saving to sell later to a museum, or on eBay. And that's a little facetious about the eight-track.

Last year the Gemini awards celebrated their 25th anniversary. I looked for a box set of the best films made in Canada for the last 25 years and I couldn't find it anywhere. Since you probably can't find 25 years anywhere in any event, I looked for a five-year set. Then I looked for a one-year set. I couldn't find it anywhere.

[Translation]

Is there any place or establishment where consumers could buy Canadian feature films, in English, in French or in another language, to give as gifts or keep for themselves? If not, could you include that in your research?

Besides the fact that it could help me with my Christmas shopping, several people would be interested in buying those feature films. But they are very hard to find. Why is that?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: It varies greatly from one language market to another in Canada. In the French-language market, mainly in the province of Quebec, it's much easier to find film titles produced in Quebec, on the retail market as well—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Sure. I went and saw *La grande séduction* (*Seducing Dr. Lewis*) and I wanted to give the film as a gift. I looked for it here in this region. I admit I didn't look for it on the Quebec side, although I could have. But you can't find it here. I suppose the reverse is true: on the Quebec side, you can't find English films, even though they may be in demand.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: It's harder.

The most practical way to get those titles is probably to buy them online.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Do you have to go to each production company and distributor? If not, do you go to a retail business like Archambault?

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: You'd have to do an online search of various retailers. You can probably find the title eventually by doing an Internet search.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So there's no incentive to that effect.

Mr. Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier: No. We're talking private property here. The rights to those films are held by the distributors when it comes to retail sales, for example. It's up to them to promote and sell their titles. They're not government owned.

I will make a note of that excellent question, the idea of establishing incentives to facilitate access for Canadians to those titles. We could definitely do better, that's for sure.

You also have to understand that the retail market for DVD sales is largely made up of big box stores like Wal-Mart, Future Shop, etc. Their business model is to choose only blockbusters. They don't have a very large number of titles. The reality of our market makes life difficult not only for Canadian films but also for independent films, even US independent films, to a large degree. That reality often causes a problem for the consumer in search of something different. In view of online purchases, Internet offers an avenue that did not exist previously. Could that be better structured, better organized? No doubt.

[English]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It would be my suggestion that somehow we may have a role to play as a department, to help package Canadian film and make it more accessible as a package.

Mr. Ed Fast: You can retire, with a big pension. You can do that. You can become an entrepreneur.

The Chair: I can switch from my role here as chair, just a bit, just to answer something. I would look into it myself, but it's something that I think an entrepreneur could do. In my little village of Sebringville, where I live, there is a building right beside my building that's called Music, and they sell only Canadian music there. You can't get anything else. It's all Canadian. That's all they promote, and they've done a great job at it. I'm going to check with them to see if they have any DVDs or do anything on film, and whether, again, it's something that might be put together. But believe you me, they've done a very good job. People come from all over the place just to buy Canadian music, and they help to promote it very much. I'll check with them on the DVDs.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I don't know what inspired me to ask that. I just have to say that if you look at the visual I have here of Jim Abbott sitting beneath a poster of Tommy Douglas, it just struck me that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Charlie Angus: We had that specifically moved over there, eh?

The Chair: We'll move on. Maybe with that, we'll give Mr. Angus the final question here today.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you very much.

I want to look at the issue of aligning the audiovisual policy tool kit. I've given my speech many times that there's absolutely no reason to expect that any Canadian is going to go see a Canadian film if they don't know who's in it. Why would they? When we look at these items in their separate parts, we're bound to fail, and television is a key. It came up again and again. Television is the ground where we create stars and television is where people get to know who they want to see, so then they see the films.

We heard again and again about the 1999 CRTC decision. People felt that was a really backwards step. So I'm concerned, and I just want to see the process of how you interact with the minister.

Right now, there are CRTC reviews going on in regard to the new technologies and on broadcasters. There has been a lot of speculation in the media about what broadcasters are talking about, like whether we need domestic content requirements, among other regulatory changes.

I'm looking to see what happens if a report comes that would broaden the impacts of the 1999 decision and affect domestic content even more. If you're looking at a report eight months down the road and your tool box has been stripped of its screwdriver and its hammer and its saw, it's going to be a challenged tool box.

The long and short of it is, do you have input with the ministerial department now, saying that these are the things you found and these are issues that need to be considered when they look at what's coming down at the CRTC? Or is that a completely separate process, in that they're going to make their decision and you guys are going to pick up the pieces one way or the other?

•(1645)

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The relationship between the minister and the CRTC is very well regulated, as you know. On the report that the government has asked the CRTC to produce for the impact of new technologies for the broadcasting system, this is a report that's going to land on my minister's desk, and I will be looking at it with my colleague from broadcasting policy, my colleague from new media, and my colleague from copyright. So this is pretty much an area of interest for the whole cultural affairs sector, to which I belong. Internally, we're going to look at what's in there and if there are links to feature film or music or books. The scope could be very broad.

In terms of the over-the-air TV policy that the CRTC is looking at, this is internal to the CRTC. They're going to come out with their decisions, and there's not much the department or the minister can do about the results of that review. In 1999, the minister of the time received criticism—not herself, but from the stakeholders—that the policy had been somehow judged as being a step backwards. That was what some stakeholders were saying, but other stakeholders were saying that it was a step forward. This is why it was a balancing act.

So on that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the government does not have the power directive over the CRTC. There is a power directive, but it is being used very rarely.

Mr. Charlie Angus: But Minister Bernier just sent back a decision to the CRTC, so the government does have that power.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes, the government has that power. It's in the act and it can be used. What I'm saying is that, in recent history, it has not been used very often.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm not prejudging what it's going to be, but if there were impacts that would definitely impact a feature film policy, would you say to the minister that this is problematic, or is that...?

Mr. Ed Fast: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, that really is inappropriate.

The Chair: It's getting a little more political.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sorry, it's not meant to be political. I'm wondering how the internal processes go. Do they provide advice? Would that just be a report that they'd study and then they would respond to it? Or would you have input with the minister to talk about it?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: We do provide a briefing note to the minister on all CRTC reports, so we would brief the minister on the impact of that report.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

That brings our round of questioning to a close here today. We have one other item of business that we want to do.

I'd like to thank you both for coming today.

Usually at the end I have a couple of comments, which I jotted down through the conversations.

I was part of the feature film committee that went around and produced that report, so I know that the 67¢ dollar was a great incentive for movies to be made here in Canada. The movement of the dollar upward has had a great impact, not only on the movie industry but on industry in general in Canada.

Again, promotion was one of the things we heard about everywhere we went. You can make the greatest movie, but if no one sees it, who knows? “Getting the bums in the seat” type of thing was one of them.

•(1650)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Jack Layton said something like that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: It was mentioned. I think Mr. Angus can verify that various witnesses mentioned that you try to get people into the movie theatres. That's how they sell popcorn and those types of things to make a profit. So the promotion of Canadian feature films is very important.

Talking about the envelopes that are used, again, it's a great incentive for that person, if they have done a good job and whatever, so they don't have to go through the same routine. They are rewarded a wee bit for doing a good job and producing good movies.

I think those two envelopes have to be there.

New media is a great challenge, and not just a challenge but a positive challenge. There are so many things we can do in new media.

When Telefilm talks about the silos they have, if they could shift a bit of money from one silo to another and have an ease of doing that...

Again, I know someone who has done quite well selling Canadian content, primarily music CDs, and promoting them in the small place where I come from.

So those things are out there, and I would hope that some could find that way again with movies. As you explained, this group might own this movie and that group might own that one, so how do you make a package out of them? Probably there is a way.

Thank you very much for appearing here today.

Thanks, everyone, for your questions.

We'll have a five-minute break.

- _____ (Pause) _____
-
- (1655)

The Chair: That was a quick five minutes, but the sooner we get our business done, the sooner we can adjourn.

It's been brought to my attention that Mr. Bélanger would ask that we have our next three committee meetings televised. In order to do that, I would need consensus around the table. So I ask for consensus.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Can we define "consensus"? Is it a majority?

The Chair: No. I think we have to have—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Well, I'll give notice if you want to be formal.

Mr. Jim Abbott: If I may add something, I think what we should decide on is whether we are talking about all three sessions, because I'm sure we would all be in agreement that there are contrary perspectives that are going to be presented. I'm wondering if the clerk might be able to give us some short-term advice as to whether we could realistically anticipate being able to get the televised rooms for all three sessions on this short notice. Once we've determined that, then we can move forward.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Jacques Lahaie): I did check, before coming this afternoon, about Wednesday's meeting, but that

was at two o'clock. I don't know if in the meantime there were other notices posted, but at two o'clock there was one committee televising on Wednesday. The House facilities allow for two committees to be televised at the same time, so if there are no other notices for televising, we would have a chance on Wednesday. When I get back to the office I can check that. If there's still availability, I can send an amended notice for Wednesday.

As for the following week, I cannot guarantee anything at this point, but I'm going to try to make reservations.

Mr. Jim Abbott: Well, I'm just suggesting that it's important that we establish that all three meetings are going to be televised before we make a determination that we can go ahead with the first one.

The Chair: Mr. Angus had a comment.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I think it is important that we try to make sure that all three are televised. I think the biggest hurdle would be the first one, because we are on short-notice time, unless you find through checking that there's a big problem with the other two.

If there is a problem on the second or third one that we can identify now, say that number two or number three can't be televised, I would not support televising, because I don't think that's fair. I don't think it would be fair to the other people who are coming forth. However, if we can find out if the first one can be televised and if we have a reasonable sense that the other two can be, I think we can make a decision to go forward, and I would support that.

- (1700)

The Chair: Okay.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It seems as if we have a consensus.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Why don't you see what you can do and tell us how it all works out?

Mr. Charlie Angus: You'll have to take the call, Mr. Chair, but we trust you as having the best interests of all in your heart.

The Chair: There we go.

The thing is, if we can set up Wednesday's meeting to be televised, we'll check to make sure that we have availability for both of the other ones. If we can't get availability for all three of them, none of them will be televised. Is that correct?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Will we know by tomorrow?

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. That is agreed.

The meeting is adjourned.

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