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**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**

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Tuesday, May 12, 2009

• (0905)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this 20th meeting of our Standing Committee on Official Languages. This morning, we resume our study of the broadcasting and services in French of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games. During the first hour of our proceedings, it will be our pleasure and privilege to hear from the members of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

Allow me to welcome first the Chair, Mr. Konrad von Finckenstein, who is here with his Vice-Chair, Mr. Michel Arpin, and Director, Ms. Annie Laflamme.

With further ado, I invite you to make your opening remarks.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein (Chairman, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission):** Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee.

As you know, with me today from the CRTC are Michel Arpin, Vice-Chair of Broadcasting, and Annie Laflamme, Director of French-Language Television Policy and Applications.

I would like to thank the Committee for inviting us to express our views on a matter of national importance. In less than a year, Canada will welcome athletes, media and spectators from dozens of countries as the host of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

The competitions will be broadcast around the world in countless languages. And yet, in Canada, we face the prospect that some francophones may not have access to coverage of the Olympic Games in their own language on conventional television.

The International Olympic Committee awarded the domestic broadcasting rights to a consortium that includes CTVglobemedia and Rogers Media. As it currently stands, the Olympic Games will be seen in French on the conventional television network TQS and the specialty services Réseau des sports (RDS) and Réseau InfoSports (RIS). In addition, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network will dedicate part of its French-language programming to the Olympic Games.

[*English*]

The consortium intends to make TQS, RDS, and RIS available free of charge to all cable companies that offer digital television services in markets with an English-speaking majority for the duration of the Olympic Games. However, this will leave a small

number of francophones, who rely on over-the-air television signals or subscribe to analog cable, without access to French coverage of the games. Their options will be limited to watching English broadcasts or, for those who have access, relying on the Internet or mobile devices.

[*Translation*]

The best solution, as far as we can see, would be for CTVglobemedia and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) to reach an agreement allowing the CBC to broadcast the events on its French language television service. At the very least, the CBC should be able to broadcast key events such as the opening and closing ceremonies.

What efforts has the CRTC made? In January, we held a public hearing to examine the broadcasting services available to Canada's official language minority communities. Both CTVglobemedia and the CBC appeared before us during the hearing. We took advantage of this opportunity to press the broadcasters on the issue of the Olympic Games.

When the CBC appeared on the first day, we were informed that negotiations with the consortium had ground to a halt. We reminded the CBC that as a public broadcaster, it has a responsibility to serve Canadians in both official languages from one end of the country to the other. Moreover, only the CBC has the capacity to offer over-the-air television coverage of the Olympic Games to francophones minority communities.

We questioned CTVglobemedia the following day. In response to the suggestion that further discussions could be held with the CBC, Mr. Rick Brace, CTVglobemedia's President of Revenue, Business Planning and Sports, told us: "In our view, it is just too late in the process now to turn back and try to make it happen."

In our view, CTVglobemedia has a responsibility, as a private broadcaster using the public spectrum, to make sure that Canadians see national events like the Olympic Games in the official language of their choice.

[*English*]

Going into the public hearing, we wanted to hear the commitment from both sides. The answers we received were not satisfactory, and we so indicated. We urged them to resume discussions and to find a solution so that French-language coverage of the Olympic Games is seen by the maximum number of French Canadians, both in Quebec and in the rest of Canada.

On April 17, I personally wrote to CTVglobemedia and the CBC asking for an update. Attached herewith are copies of the two letters I received in response. You can read them for yourself. The responses speak for themselves.

We feel that we have gone as far as we can. An agreement can only be reached through commercial negotiations, if it's not already too late. It's not the commission's place to impose itself in these types of negotiations. You have a chance to ask the broadcasters themselves to explain why they have been unable to come to an understanding.

Let me say a few words about new media.

During our public hearing in January, we also explored the availability of broadcasting services through new media. The commission believes that these services could play a key role in enhancing the reflection of official language minority communities in the Canadian broadcasting system.

[Translation]

There are a number of social networking websites that bring together people from dispersed communities who share a common interest, such as a language. For instance, groups can be created by Saskatchewan francophones (or Fransaskois) or by anglophones living in Gaspé by using social networking software such as Facebook. We were somewhat disappointed that official-language minority groups do not seem to have grasped this medium's untapped potential, that it could be used in a variety of ways to support their cultural development.

[English]

The Olympic Games provide a perfect opportunity to make full use of such platforms. The consortium has informed us that all of its programming, whether it originates on TSN or TQS, will be streamed live on its website. Real-time updates and videos will be available on mobile devices, and programming will also be available on demand, if you want to watch an event you missed earlier in the day.

While the consortium's strategy is commendable, much of this content is only accessible through a broadband Internet connection. We all know that there are many areas in this country where broadband is not yet available. The most recent federal budget set aside \$225 million for the deployment of broadband Internet in remote communities. In addition, all of the provinces and territories have been developing their own initiatives to improve broadband access.

These are encouraging signs, but much more needs to be done.

● (0910)

[Translation]

In the report we submitted to the federal government on March 30, we recommended that all levels of government should support the adoption and implementation of broadband Internet access in remote and rural official-language minority communities. Short-term solutions might include favouring cost-effective technologies, such as satellite or wireless Internet access.

[English]

In closing, everyone associated with the 2010 Olympic Games has a responsibility to do the country proud. Canadians are entitled to watch these events, which are taking place in their own backyard, in the official language of their choice. The commission feels very strongly about this. We have encouraged CTVglobemedia and the CBC to work through the current impasse. We see no reason why they would be unable to reach a compromise.

We'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opening statement.

We'll now move on, with Mr. Pablo Rodriguez.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, everyone. Welcome.

It is a pleasure for us to see you here. We're used to seeing you in the Canadian Heritage Committee, but I'm quite happy to have the opportunity to discuss with you an issue that specifically concerns our linguistic duality.

Mr. von Finckenstein, does the CRTC have a role to play with regard to linguistic duality?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Yes. The Broadcasting Act states that one of our duties is to promote the two official languages. With respect to the official languages, there is section 41, in which the CRTC is named as a special federal agency with the special task of doing everything possible to enhance the vitality of the two official languages and assist in their development.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** So there's something in your mandate to that end.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** As an agency, is this an important subject for you, that you analyze, what you examine and ask questions about?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** We're very much aware of our obligations. We have bilingual internal policies; all our sections are bilingual, and all our senior officials speak both languages. Our rules differ between English and French broadcasting because the challenges are not the same. We try to do everything in our power to promote the two languages and to do what the act requires of us in that regard.

[English]

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** It's a theme that's important for you to have discussed on a regular basis.

[Translation]

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Yes. I have spoken to the Commissioner of Official Languages. He wanted us to bear the official languages implications in mind automatically every time it comes to implementing a policy, for example. We have done that. When we make a presentation before the committee, we have a list of those implications.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Do you regularly meet with the commissioner to discuss your mandate?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I met him for the first time seven months ago. I've also met him at social events, but not for official discussions. However, I questioned him when he made submissions at our hearings.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Conventional television is currently going through a crisis. We're talking about the eventual, actual or possible closing of stations. In the current economic context, isn't there a risk that the coverage of the Olympics will be limited?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I doubt that. The coverage of the Olympic Games is very profitable and highly popular. The networks will focus on that coverage.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** You said that certain francophones—and that moreover is the reason why you are here—might be deprived of broadcasts of the Olympic Games in their language. You don't have any real power, however; that is to say you wouldn't be able to tell the people at CTV and Radio-Canada to sit down and enter into an agreement.

• (0915)

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** No. We don't exactly know how many francophones outside Quebec don't have access to cable or satellite distribution. We believe there might be between 9,000 or 12,000.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Isn't the percentage generally referred to between 4% and 10%?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Between 4% and 10% of what?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm talking about people who don't have access to cable or satellite broadcasting.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I'm not talking about the percentage. The figure we're talking about right now is between 7,000 and 12,000. I said I found it unacceptable that those people didn't have access to the Olympic Games in their language, and I asked that all efforts be made to correct the situation.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Is the consortium involving CTV, RDS and others making enough of an effort?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** It's doing a lot. TQS, RDS and RIS will be covering the event. In fact, even for cable subscribers who haven't paid for a subscription, TQS will enable them to watch all of the games. Nevertheless, approximately 12,000 persons who don't have cable or satellite TV won't be able to watch those events in French.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Are we talking about 12,000 persons or 12,000 households?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I'm going to ask Mr. Arpin to answer.

**Mr. Michel Arpin (Vice-Chairman, Broadcasting, Chairman's Office, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission):** Unfortunately, our figures always concern persons, not households. Statistics Canada's cross-references between BBM and Nielsen Media Research data are always based on population, not households. No one knows exactly how many households that represents. We also don't know where they are. All the statistics and

polls tell us is that a certain group of persons doesn't have access to analog TV services.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez.

We'll continue with Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning to all of you from the CRTC.

In a March 30 report on the Vancouver Olympic Games, the CRTC said that the two main issues were, and I quote: "The difference between the number of hours of coverage in English and in French and [...] access to French-language coverage."

With respect to the difference in the number of hours of coverage in English and in French, are you thinking that we're headed toward a situation in which there will be fewer broadcast hours in French, to enable people who speak French in Canada to watch and listen to rebroadcasts of the Olympic Games, than there will be in English for anglophone citizens?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** That's always been the case, even if the programs were broadcast by Radio-Canada or CBC. It is the broadcasters that determine expectations, the popular games in a region, what people want to see.

This time, we're going to have more hours of coverage in French than the last time, at the Turin Olympic Games. The number of broadcast hours by television stations has been determined. The broadcasters broadcast in accordance with market demand.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right. This isn't a major issue, contrary to what you said in the March 30 report. Can people who want to watch the Olympic Games in French do so at all times, when they want, regardless of where they live in Canada?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** That depends. If they want to watch them at any time, everything is broadcast on the Internet in both languages.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I'm talking about television.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** All right. On television, it depends. Do those people watch TQS, RDS or RIS in French?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** They want to watch them in French; they're watching TV. Do they have a way to get them, regardless of where they live in Canada? If I, Richard Nadeau, am somewhere in Canada during the Olympic Games and I turn on the TV, can I watch the Olympic Games in French at any time, with no problem?

• (0920)

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I suggest you put the question to the witnesses who will appear after me and who will be broadcasting the games. It isn't one of my responsibilities to determine what they do.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** It's they who can give you the exact figures.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right. I'm citing the CRTC document. That's why I asked you the question.

The Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Fraser, emphasized that, in his view, there must be equal access to the Olympic Games. That means that an anglophone and a francophone who want to watch the Olympic Games in English or in French must have the same opportunity to watch them. Is that your opinion?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** The Commissioner of Official Languages is describing an ideal situation. I absolutely agree that that would be ideal. However, it should not be forgotten that the broadcasting networks are commercial undertakings.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** We are in Canada. That shows me once again that the French fact is a business issue. There aren't enough people in the region and access to the games isn't guaranteed for someone who is passing through or who lives there.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I can't accept that. As I previously said, we've authorized the networks to do the broadcasting. They are making arrangements with the International Olympic Committee and are offering what they think the market demands. If you don't agree with their decision, ask them the question.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I'm going to do that, sir; don't you worry about that.

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** I'd like to add an additional piece of information. CTV confirmed for us, when we conducted the study that resulted in the March 30 report, that the original number of broadcasting hours would be the same in both English and in French. There's simply a repeat rate factor as a result of which there will be differences in the total number of broadcasting hours.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** So that will be the case 100% all across Canada, in French?

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Godin, go ahead please.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to the witnesses.

I would like to get a better understanding. Will French-language coverage be 100% available across Canada in French?

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** That's correct.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** And yet it was just said that 7,000 to 12,000 persons won't be served. So that's not 100%.

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** We're talking about broadcasting hours. I didn't say they would receive them. There will be as many original broadcast hours in French as in English. That's what the CTV representatives told us.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** It starts in Vancouver but we don't know where it will go.

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** We know—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We don't know whether it will get to the other coast, to the Atlantic, to Fredericton. Francophones in Fredericton, New Brunswick, who watch TQS—

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** In Fredericton, Mr. Godin, there will necessarily be cable or satellite.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** People who don't have an antenna won't receive them. If it's broadcast by Radio-Canada, they'll receive it.

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** That's correct.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We agree. Francophones in Fredericton, in an officially bilingual province, won't receive it. You agree with me?

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** I do.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That's good. Thank you.

My other question is for Mr. von Finckenstein. Mr. Chairman, if I understood correctly, you said that the CRTC considers that Radio-Canada has a public television mandate. Is that consistent with the act?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Yes, it is.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** What is the CRTC's power? Can you force Radio-Canada's hand? It's the only network that could serve the 7,000 or 12,000 households that don't have cable, unless I am mistaken. Does the CRTC have the power to force them?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** No, it's as I explained.

I asked Radio-Canada to appear before us and to explain the situation to us. It was clear that francophones receiving analog TV signals who don't have cable or satellite service won't be able to see the games if they are outside Quebec. I publicly told both that I found that situation unacceptable. However, I don't have the power to compel them. I only have the power to criticize them, to tell them I don't find that acceptable and that I would like to find an agreement.

• (0925)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** In your opinion, who has the power to compel them? Would the Government of Canada have that power? You don't have that power. We'll definitely be talking to the Commissioner of Official Languages, who doesn't have the power to compel them. Who has that power? Dialogue is all well and good.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Ultimately, it's the Parliament of Canada.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Pardon me one moment.

Everyone says it's not acceptable, that all Canadians should have access to the Olympic Games in both languages. I read your correspondence with CTV and Radio-Canada. You'd think we're going nowhere. Who do you think has the power to compel them?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I can't give you an answer because I can only talk about my authorities. I don't have programming power. I don't tell them what to broadcast. I grant a licence, I set conditions that must be met, but the network's programming is the responsibility of CBC/Radio-Canada's managers.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** A little earlier you talked about the programming of cultural events and the games. You'd think there were more obligations regarding culture than regarding the games themselves.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** No. We say, for example, that we want 20 hours of public or local programs broadcast per week. We set conditions like that. It's up to them to determine what they do within the imposed limits. We've never imposed special conditions or coverage for that event. It's up to them to do that. After all, they all have a management and a management team. They have to do what they think is necessary within the conditions we have set.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

We'll continue with Ms. Shelly Glover.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** Good morning, and welcome to all our witnesses.

I'm going to make a few comments before asking questions. We've done a little research as well to see how many Canadians will be able to receive the Olympic Games. Even if Radio-Canada was the broadcaster, that percentage would only be 99%. So it would be impossible, even with Radio-Canada, to achieve 100% coverage. In addition, CTVglobemedia has already set an objective of 97%, and coverage will be available in our minority communities. So we're talking about 2%.

Are my figures accurate enough, Mr. von Finckenstein?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Your figures are correct.

**M. Michel Arpin:** They're correct. BBM confirms from its surveys that 99% of households have access to television. You have to think that some people don't have television receivers in their homes. Indeed, 97% is the percentage that CTV has been using for a few weeks now to inform people of the effort it has made to offer its signals. We haven't mentioned APTN here, but that network will also be broadcasting events related to the Olympic Games in French.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** You've talked about the point I was going to raise. APTN will also be broadcasting the games. So the percentage will be higher than 97%.

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** That makes it possible to add people to reach the 97% figure, particularly because APTN is very much represented in the north, which is not necessarily the case of the other services. That contributes to the supply of services that CTV has established.

• (0930)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Perfect. Thank you for your efforts to ensure the games are broadcast to the largest possible number of people.

Bell TV has just proposed to offer a satellite free of charge, what's called freesat, as my colleague just said. Could that enable the 2% of people who don't have access to the games to have access?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** No, for two reasons. First, the system currently doesn't exist. That's something they're considering offering later. Second, every person must have an antenna, a set-up box and installation, which costs roughly \$500. All francophones who now watch analog television, that is 7,000 or 12,000 persons, would have to spend at least \$500 for that installation. The freesat system doesn't exist for the moment, and I don't know whether it can be set up on time or the Olympic Games.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** If we started implementing that system right away, you don't think it would be possible to offer it for the 2010 games?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I have to ask Bell. Perhaps it could be set up, but people will have to spend at least \$500 to receive the freesat signal.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Does that \$500 cost include the device, the box or were you talking about the...?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** The cost includes the box, the antenna and the installation.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** That includes three things, but otherwise it would be free; there would be no subscription fee.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** People wouldn't need to subscribe or anything like that. It's a one-time initial expense.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** We're going to ask Bell to provide us with figures. I thought it would be much cheaper. Are you sure of your figures?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** These are the initial figures they gave us. The amount may be less, depending on the kind of set-up box and the place where it's bought. The situation is evolving.

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** We were given certain figures in the context of the transition-to-digital hearings that we've held in recent weeks. Bell TV's freesat project would be implemented for August 2011, at the time of the transition to digital. The Bell people consider this a development project. It's an option they're putting on the table in the context of discussions on the review of a set of policies. It's not a final decision for them. They mentioned a series of conditions to us, and, as a result of those conditions, it's a bit premature at the moment to talk about freesat in the context of a single two-week event. This nevertheless involves a \$500 investment for two weeks, whereas the freesat project, which Bell TV is considering implementing for 2011, is for an indeterminate period of time.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Glover.

We'll now start our second round with Mr. D'Amours.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being with us this morning, Mr. von Finckenstein, and thanks to your colleagues as well.

The point is not to determine whether the percentage is 99%, 98% or 100%, but to find a solution for people who don't have access to service. Perhaps not everyone has a television at home. That's possible. However, for those who do, the goal is to find a way to offer them this service.

You've presented us with some figures. However, there are what we call rabbit ears back home. They cost nothing, and they come with the television set. You only need to place them on the set. Ultimately, all these costs are probably an attempt to make money from poor people who can't afford to pay for services to watch the Olympic Games.

Mr. Chairman, you've distributed correspondence between CTV and Radio-Canada to us. Ultimately you wind up thinking this is about minor matters, that we're bogging down in details. And yet the date of the games is approaching. Will we have to wait until December 2009 for everybody to agree? Perhaps we could find a solution right now.

There are people back home who aren't cable subscribers. In their case, watching the Olympic Games is a problem. There are francophones in rural areas in New Brunswick. The problems may be of a financial nature, but couldn't we show a little good will for the benefit of the sports community and the public?

● (0935)

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I submitted this correspondence to you because I'm as frustrated as you are. I don't understand why it's impossible to negotiate a solution. We're talking about 12,000 individuals; so it's a small number. These are francophones who will never become customers of CTV. I don't see how sharing its signal with Radio-Canada is a problem for CTV. I know that Radio-Canada isn't prepared to retransmit the signal without adding its commentary. Whatever the case may be, it's definitely possible to find a solution.

For that reason, we've urged those people to appear before you. We made it absolutely clear that we wanted to find a solution. I even asked them to provide us with an explanation in writing. You have it before you. They are going to occupy this seat after me. Ask them the question. I frankly don't understand.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** As I said earlier, the risk is that we'll find a solution in December of this year. Everyone, panic stricken, will show good will, agree and act responsibly by giving the entire population access.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** There may be a half-solution. For the big event, that is for the opening ceremony, or the hockey, if Canada is playing for the gold medal, there could be a sharing with everyone. Perhaps we could find a partial solution. However, the negotiations are over, and no one wants to talk about it.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** The Olympic Games won't last two years. We're talking about providing access to the games' broadcast to the entire population for only a few weeks. I know that's not your responsibility, but it might have been pleasant to have the CTV people and to have everybody, side by side, find a solution and grounds for agreement here in the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Then we simply could have stopped talking about all this.

We're talking about it because people won't have access to the broadcast to the Olympic Games and that this is an important issue. At some point, perhaps your agency, the CRTC, should find a way to bring all those businesses together. There won't be other Olympic Games in Canada for many years. Today, this would be the ideal opportunity to show some good will. It seems to me something is lacking on each side.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I share your opinion, but don't forget these companies both applied to be the broadcaster of the games and that they were therefore in competition. CTV won, and now there's a little hostility between them, but we can't do anything about that. We're going to come back at the charge. However, I've

received the same answer from both, that negotiations are over and there's nothing to be done.

**The Chair:** Ms. Guay, go ahead please.

● (0940)

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chinese managed to make it so that both official languages will be used, and that has proven to be a success. And yet French is not their language. On the other hand, Canada, whose two official languages are French and English, isn't even able to serve its population. The percentage of people who won't have access to the broadcast of the games is 2.5%, which is equal to the entire population of New Brunswick. That's very significant. I know you've exercised pressure on this subject, Mr. von Finckenstein, and I'm not blaming you personally. The committee is looking for solutions to ensure that the Olympic games won't be a failure and that everyone will have access to them.

For my part, I live near Montreal. My riding is in the Laurentians. However, a large portion of the population doesn't have access to high-speed Internet or to Videotron or TQS. People who aren't cable subscribers don't get TQS. Consequently, they won't be able to get the Olympic Games. It's a tough situation. If I didn't have access to Videotron's services at home, I wouldn't be able to see the Olympic Games live.

In an economic crisis, the first thing people get rid of is cable service, which is expensive. That's what we're currently seeing. That moreover is why Videotron and Bell are doing a lot to promote dish-style antenna.

I'm concerned about the idea that the percentage of the population that does not have access to the broadcast of the games may be much higher than 4%, 5% or 6%. We're not really looking very good internationally. That's very troubling. I'd like to hear your comments on that subject.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Don't forget that CTV has made an effort. The TQS and RIS signals will be unscrambled. Even non-subscribers will be able to see those channels during the games. As you say, that's not enough, and it changes nothing for those who don't have access to cable or satellite distribution. That's the problem we've identified. You could put the question you've asked me to the consortium of CTV and partners, which will be appearing before you.

**Mr. Michel Arpin:** Ms. Guay, I would like to point out that the quarterly results of the public companies tell us that cable distribution is something of a recession-proof system. All the cable companies are experiencing growth right now. And the operators of those companies say that subscriber numbers increase significantly in every recession. People cut a lot of recreational expenses. What they have left is cocooning, and that includes their cable subscription.

Your fears that there will be a significant decline in the number of cable subscriptions, and thus in the number of people who have access to the Olympic Games broadcasts, seem contradicted by the results of the businesses consulted to date. You say that TQS isn't available in certain regions, but I would point out to you that neither TVA nor Télé-Québec are either.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** No, but Radio-Canada is.

I would like you to give me a little information, if you have any, on the reasons why the agreement between TQS, CTV and Radio-Canada, which could permit extensive broadcasting of the games, isn't working.

**M. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** From what I understand, CTV offered Radio-Canada its signal provided that the latter retransmitted it without making any changes. The Radio-Canada people refused, saying that that was unacceptable, that this was on their airwaves, but that they would be prepared to enter into a co-production. They proposed that a Radio-Canada announcer introduce the games, comment on them and conduct some interviews. The CTV people answered that they weren't interested.

It's a deadlock. As for the rest of it, you'll have to talk to those people.

• (0945)

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I understand.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I'd simply like to make a comment, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Arpin, with regard to Videotron and Bell, the figures on the recession haven't yet come out. When they do come out, sir, we can discuss them.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Guay.

We'll now go to Mr. Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First I would like to welcome the members of the CRTC. I would also like to tell my committee colleagues that it has been my pleasure to know the chairman for about three decades. I hope you won't hold that personal relationship against me.

**The Chair:** That must make you feel younger, Mr. Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** That makes us both feel younger.

Moreover, I must pay tribute to Mr. von Finckenstein for the extraordinary progress he has achieved in learning not only the language of Molière, but also our own, which is that of Rabelais.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to go back briefly to a comment by Mr. von Finckenstein that caught my ear. It concerned that compass that is the Official Languages Act and the respect the CRTC claims to have for it.

Last year, I followed the community radio hearings that were held in the National Capital Region. However, the decision rendered by the CRTC disappointed me. I expressed my disappointment publicly, following which the government felt obliged to make an unprecedented decision, to order the CRTC to go back to the

drawing board. Other hearings on the same subject have recently been held.

With regard to the matter before us today, which is frustrating us enormously and, according to you, is frustrating you as well, everyone should try a little harder. A few years ago, in the context of another matter involving the broadcasters, officials from CBC/Radio-Canada and the Réseau des sports appeared before the Official Languages Committee. I think it was about broadcasting the hockey games. The representatives of those two networks made statements before the committee—and one assumes they were under oath—that we're not consistent with each other. The committee then compelled the two parties to agree, and the dispute was ultimately resolved.

[English]

In your opinion, how should the concept of equitable access, of equal quality, to broadcasting of the games be defined?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I agree with you and your colleagues. I have said it publicly. It's unacceptable that people cannot listen to the games in the language of their choice. After all, they're taking place in Canada and will be celebrated as a great Canadian event. I am absolutely unable to understand what the business objections are to this. We're talking about a maximum of 12,000 people.

These are francophones outside of Quebec. They're never going to become CTV customers, so what's the problem with letting CBC share the signal? Tell us what the issue is with saying, "CBC, don't just give us your waves. You may actually use the CBC logo and CBC commentary. After all, it's your network." But find a logical solution. I don't see how it will harm either TQS or RDS in any way, because nobody subscribes to them unless they speak their language. If they do subscribe to them, they don't need it, so we're talking about people who don't have access to this. Why is there no solution? These are two competitors.

• (0950)

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** But they're not competitors in this.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** They will be bidding for the next one, etc. They see themselves as competitors, and they don't want to make a deal with a competitor. That's the best I can tell you.

I think there's plenty of room for some workable compromise. I've said so publicly, and I've shared my letters with you, so you know exactly how the situation stands.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Galipeau, go ahead please.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I have a brief question, Mr. Chairman. I wonder whether Mr. von Finckenstein could take certain regulatory measures to ensure that all Canadians have access to a full broadcast of the games in both official languages.

[English]

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Unfortunately, as I told you, I don't think we have the authority to do it. It's as simple as that.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll conclude with Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, in your opinion, does CTV have a linguistic responsibility, an obligation with respect to official bilingualism legislation in the Olympic Games? I'm not talking about day-to-day life because CTV is an English-language channel; that's clear. Under CRTC regulations, do the CTV people have a responsibility?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** In our view, and I believe it's generally accepted—the airwaves are public property; they don't belong to the broadcasters. We grant them a licence to use the airwaves, and with that come obligations. As we live in a bilingual country—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I'm going to come back to that. They have responsibilities, and they have obligations; you're clear on that. Radio-Canada has them, CTV has them, CRTC grants licences, and those groups have obligations to citizens. Furthermore, the government is there to ensure—

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I'm going to interrupt you.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Pardon me, the government has responsibilities. You wrote a report that you sent to the government. What was its response? Did you get any feedback?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** We received no official or unofficial response to our report.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** They didn't trouble themselves to do that.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** You're talking about obligations, but I believe it would be more correct to talk about expectations. We're talking about public property, and when we grant a licence, we hope it will be used in accordance with the objectives of the Broadcasting Act. For CTV—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We can go fishing all day and hope to catch fish, but without catching any. Obviously, you have it or you don't.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** They don't have any obligations.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Someone somewhere has to force matters.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** They aren't a French-language broadcaster. CTV doesn't have an obligation to broadcast in French.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** So the government has a responsibility. It hasn't even officially answered your report. The government also has obligations; it was elected.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** It's up to you to determine that, not me.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Absolutely. And we're going to do it.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I was asked for a report. I prepared it and submitted it to the government, which made it public. Now you can draw your own conclusions.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Indeed, that's up to us. I want to know where it's gone. However, it hasn't gone very far. You've shouldered your responsibilities.

You also reported to the Commissioner of Official Languages.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** No.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You didn't talk to the Commissioner of Official Languages?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** We talked to the Commissioner. You asked whether we had sent him a report. We had contact with him. We spoke to him. We are going to meet him. He appeared before you. We shared ideas.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We have expectations of CTV.

Does Radio-Canada have any obligations?

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** Yes, Radio-Canada has obligations with regard to its programs. The problem is that the Olympic Games' coverage isn't part of a program. It's the responsibility of CTV, which bought the rights, which won the competition.

• (0955)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** They say it's not worth it if you can't agree with Radio-Canada.

**Mr. Konrad W. von Finckenstein:** I suggest you put all those questions to the CTV officials who will be appearing after me.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

That completes the first part of our meeting. I'd like to thank you, Mr. von Finckenstein, and the members of the CRTC.

We are going to suspend the sitting for a few minutes to enable us to welcome our witnesses.

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•

• (1000)

**The Chair:** We'll continue the second part of our meeting on the study on broadcasting in French of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games.

It is our pleasure to have the official broadcaster of the Olympic Games. I want to welcome Mr. Rick Brace, President, Revenue, Business Planning and Sports at CTV. I also welcome Mr. Goldstein, Senior Vice-President, Regulatory Affairs, and Mr. Frappier, who is French Chef de Mission and President and General Manager of RDS and RIS, a channel I'm increasingly discovering with my son, who very much appreciates your programs.

Without further ado, we'll begin with Mr. Brace's opening remarks.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace (President, Revenue, Business Planning and Sports, CTV Inc.):** Thank you. Mr. Frappier will follow me.

[Translation]

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee and committee staff.

[English]

Thank you for the invitation to discuss with you the Olympic consortium's exciting plans for French-language broadcasting coverage of the 2010 Olympic Games.

My name is Rick Brace. I am the president of revenue business planning and sports for CTV Inc. I am pleased to be joined by Gerry Frappier, who is the French chef de mission for Canada's Olympic broadcasting media consortium, as well as the president of Le Réseau des Sports and Le Réseau Info-Sports. We are also joined on the panel today by David Goldstein, senior vice-president of regulatory affairs for CTVglobemedia.

To be the official broadcast partner of the 2010 Olympic Games in our own country is a source of tremendous pride for CTVglobemedia. Our guarantee is to provide the most hours of coverage across the most platforms and deliver the most comprehensive coverage ever witnessed. Our commitment is to tell the stories, create the heroes, and make Canada's athletes household names to Canadians, in both official languages.

To do this, we have brought together some of the finest television and radio broadcasters in Canada. While Rogers is our main broadcast partner for television and radio, we are also working with RDS, RIS, TQS, APTN, and Corus Radio.

As French chef de mission, Gerry is responsible for coordinating with our partners, and he shares our commitment to ensuring an unprecedented level of French-language coverage. We are achieving unprecedented coverage because, for the first time ever by a Canadian broadcaster, every single second of live events will be broadcast on one of our French-language television stations as it will be on our English-language television stations.

To be clear, this means that all 655 hours of live events in the 2010 Winter Games, including the opening and closing ceremonies, right through to the gold medal hockey game and beyond, will be broadcast in both official languages. Never before has this been accomplished.

Turning now to other broadcast platforms, we have granted Corus Radio, with 10 French-language radio stations in Quebec, exclusive access to all RDS and TQS content. This will allow them to broadcast live on-site reports and news updates from the Olympics, including live play-by-play of the women's and men's hockey, as well as access to television audio for simulcasts of gold medal events and interviews with our athletes. As well, all TQS and RDS coverage will be streamed live and will be available on demand on our broadband platform.

Our comprehensive broadcast plans mean that Canadians will be able to watch an unlimited number of hours of the games and choose what they want, when they want. In fact, there will be more opportunities for viewing than at any previous Olympics. Between television and broadband, there will be 4,500 hours of Olympic events accessible for Canadians to watch.

Gerry will continue.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gerry Frappier (French Chef de Mission, President and General Manager, Réseau des Sports (RDS) and Réseau Info-Sports (RIS), Canada's Olympic Broadcast Media Consortium):** We are aware of the Committee's concern that a small percentage of Canadians will not be able to view the Games. Let me assure you that since winning the broadcast rights for the games in 2006, we have been committed to pursuing widespread distribution and greater

accessibility of the French-language networks. Here's what we have achieved so far.

We have approached all cable and satellite companies outside Quebec, both large and small, to offer them the signals of TQS, RDS and RIS so that they can in turn provide access to these signals free-of-charge to their customers that currently do not subscribe to these channels.

We estimate that the six largest distributors reach 93% of the cable and satellite homes outside Quebec. And all six have indicated a willingness to participate in our freeview.

The remaining 7% are served by 200 small and medium-sized distributors, and approximately half are represented by the Canadian Cable Systems Alliance. CCSA has agreed to canvass its members in respect of our freeview offer.

Telecom distributors represent almost half of the 7%, and we are pleased to say that we have received positive feedback from these distributors.

The remaining independent distributors, which number about 100 and represent less than 1% of the cable and satellite homes outside Quebec, have all received written freeview offers. And we have followed up our letters with phone calls. But to put these distributors into perspective, most are very small and include such entities as motels.

As well, we approached the Vancouver Hotel Association who has assisted us in ensuring universal access of our French-language services.

The French-language stations that will carry the Olympic Games are currently viewed by approximately 96% of Francophones in Canada. And this percentage will increase with the support of our distribution partners that accept our freeview offer.

We fully recognize that the success of our freeview offer relies on the participation of our distribution partners, and we welcome your support to encourage all distributors to participate to the fullest extent possible.

Finally, this "free-view" period will occur throughout the entire month of February and not just for the duration of the games. This will allow viewers to participate in the lead-up and conclusion of the games, extending the Olympic movement beyond just a 17-day sporting event.

As the Committee is likely aware, a substantial number of Canada's Winter Olympic athletes come from Quebec. And as Rick noted at the beginning of our presentation, we are dedicated to telling their stories, creating the heroes and making all of our athletes' household names to all Canadians. We are well on the way to achieving this.

First, we have assembled a French production team of over 200 of the top broadcast professionals solely dedicated to produce the highest standard of quality. These individuals will be present at all competition venues doing stand-alone production at each site and with complete editorial independence.

Second, an on-air talent roster is second to none and includes many of the biggest names past and present in the French sporting world. These include Alexandre Despatie, Jean-Luc Brassard, Richard Garneau, Pierre Houde and Gaétan Boucher among others. These individuals will add a unique level of analysis and storytelling from an athlete's perspective.

Third, we have created and staffed a separate French-language bureau in Vancouver; it has been operational since January, providing regular news and updates.

• (1005)

Fourth, we have begun many unique pre-Olympic programming initiatives which are already airing on our French-language broadcast partners. This includes a weekly show on RDS called *Vers Vancouver 2010* which showcases our athletes and to which, Nathalie Lambert, four-time Olympic speed-skater and the athletes' chef de mission, is a regular contributor to this program.

Fifth, we will have coverage from the "French Quarter" which will be constructed on Granville Island, where many provinces and countries representing La Francophonie will be present. In this manner, not only will we be covering the Olympic Games but the "Cultural Olympics" as well.

As you can tell from our presentation, CTV is committed to ensuring the best coverage—both in quality and quantity—for Francophones throughout Canada. We have drawn guidance in this process through our pro-active outreach to several Francophone associations with whom we have consulted on our Olympic coverage plans. You've heard from one of these organizations, La Fondation Canadienne pour le dialogue des cultures, ably represented by Guy Matte. As well, we're in constant communication with Jacques Gauthier from VANOC who also appeared before you.

We share in their views expressed to you that the level of mutual collaboration has been very strong and productive. We have kept them informed of our on-going development plans and they have signalled their support, satisfaction and confidence.

• (1010)

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** Thank you, Gerry,

In conclusion, CTV recognizes that Canada's hosting of the Olympics represents a tremendous opportunity to showcase Canada's linguistic duality to the world. We've not treated this occasion lightly. We believe we've shown this in our broadcast coverage plans, which we've described to you here today.

[*Translation*]

We thank you for the opportunity to appear today and we welcome your questions. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Brace.

Just before starting, Mr. Frappier, you mentioned that you were going to offer the Olympic Games broadcast signal to some 300 independent distributors. If that was the will of the committee members, would it be possible to provide us with a list of those cable distributors so that we too can encourage them to accept your offer?

**Mr. Gerry Frappier:** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

So we'll now begin the round of questions with Ms. Zarac.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Good morning. Thank you for your presentation, and congratulations. What we're hearing is really comforting. Television access before and during the Olympic Games was one of the committee's concerns. Congratulations on those actions.

You also mentioned that you already had an office in place with a staff that speaks French. Congratulations. We heard that there were committees that had just met, in April, whereas the Olympic Games will be held in February. Congratulations on all these actions.

We also heard earlier that the broadcast of the Olympic Games is highly profitable. I understand that there should be this will to present the Olympic Games to the largest possible audience, in French and English.

The problem stems from the fact that we don't know who is responsible. Who is responsible for ensuring that the games are broadcast everywhere, to all citizens, francophone and anglophone? Earlier we heard that Mr. Frappier somewhat has that responsibility. We also heard that the CRTC, the government, also has that responsibility. Who can ensure that all Canadian citizens will be able to watch the Olympic Games? Who really has that power?

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I'll make a couple of comments on what you said.

I think Canadians have a responsibility. I think we have to work on this together. It's not any one person individually. You heard from Chairman von Finckenstein, who said that the CRTC doesn't, in and of itself, have the ability to mandate this. So really, it's how we pull together.

I can tell you that when we got the rights—and we were very proud to get them—a couple of years ago, our first piece of business was to approach SRC and say, "All right, how can we distribute this on the broadest possible basis?"

We determined that the way it would have to work.... What's really important in the Olympic Games is that the exclusivity of rights have to remain with one organization, particularly the control of the advertising industry. You can't have a number of people on the street selling it. So there is a commercial aspect to this. But there's also a social responsibility that we acknowledge.

So we approached them and said what we'd like to do is mirror exactly what we did with the Montreal Canadiens. With the Montreal Canadiens, when RDS won those rights several years back and they weren't going to be available on conventional television, we went to SRC and said, "We will provide you the signal, we'll provide you our production, we'll control the commercials, but you will have the ability to put them on conventional television, on your airwaves." And they agreed. At the end of the day it worked beautifully well. There wasn't an issue. It was accepted by the public. In fact, we were pleased with the experiment.

So there is a precedent for this.

What we did with the Olympics was to go back and ask exactly the same thing—if they would be willing to take our signal. We need to control the advertising inventory and we also need to control the production. You can't have different people producing at the Olympics. It's too big an event. It has to be coordinated. And that is where it really became a problem, because their position had changed since the time of the Montreal Canadiens. What they said was that they have to control their advertising industry. They have to control production. They want to be on-site. Basically, they wanted to be a rights holder, so to speak, without having actually purchased the rights or won the rights. That's where it really halted. We tried as recently as the end of February of this year. I think those are the two letters that the CRTC chairman talked about today.

The last communication we had with SRC at that point was that, first of all, they would still want to produce their own production, but they would cherry-pick events. They wouldn't do every event, they'd just do certain events, and they would also be able to sell the commercial inventory. That, for us, as I hope I've explained, is not something that is possible.

That is really when we decided.... We've tried three times now to come to an agreement. They didn't see our point of view, and we respect their point of view. If that's the way they feel, that's their right. But unfortunately, it doesn't leave us with the best solution to the problem.

What it leaves us with is what we're doing now. It leaves us with dealing with the cable companies for free views and making sure that we get expanded coverage on other services, like APTN. We're grateful to them for coming onboard with eight hours of Olympics a day, by the way, in the French language. And there are other things that we've put into place. All of these are helpful and they get us to the percentages that have been discussed, and they hopefully get us to where we need to be as best we can. But it's not the best solution.

At the end of the day, however, what I really want to make clear—and I made this clear to the Senate committee yesterday—is that universality is not possible. Even today, as others have pointed out here, not everyone can receive television. That's in English or in French. So it's not 100% of the population. It will always be

something less. Whether it's 99%, 98%, it's in that range. That's where we are.

● (1015)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Zarac.

Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, gentlemen. The CRTC outlined three important factors in the context of an activity as imposing as the Olympic Games, the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games. One of the three factors is reflecting the minority communities in the programming. You know that there is a cultural component to the games.

Mr. Brace, I would like to ask you whether you are familiar with the Brayons du Canada? Does that mean anything to you? That means nothing to you. Are you familiar with the Fransaskois? That means nothing to you. Are you familiar with the Franco-Ténois?

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** Oh, did you say franco-Saskatchewan?

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau, please give the interpreters time to translate those expressions.

● (1020)

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right.

All these important communities within the broader Canadian francophone community and Canada must have their place within the programming of the Vancouver Olympic Games. If we haven't noted the importance of that, that means that VANOC has failed in the countdown. As we know, it forgot the francophone aspect of Canada in its launch.

I want to know whether, as the broadcaster of the games, you have a preferential place, which is rightly theirs, to promote Canada's French-speaking communities. I'm not asking more, but I demand that equality. What activities have you put in place for that?

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I'm going to ask Mr. Frappier to speak on this, because he is the chef de mission.

But just before we do, I want to make something clear. You talked about the launch event and how it was not something that was, in your view, acceptable in terms of the balance between French and English coverage. We've heard that from others. What we need to make clear is that VANOC is the organization you would have to speak to on that. We don't control the events. We only show the pictures. We can just broadcast them. We don't control, for example, the opening ceremonies. They hire an independent producer who actually delivers the products.

I'll pass it to Gerry.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** That's fine, Mr. Frappier, because Mr. Brace just answered the question. It's not your responsibility, but rather that of VANOC. So we agree on that.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** In terms of the games and the delivery of the games, the show on the ground, whether it's ceremonies, press conferences, lead-up events, or anything like that, is controlled by VANOC. Our role and our responsibility is to broadcast that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right, thank you.

The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada is the umbrella organization that represents all the minority francophone and acadian communities in Canada—the French Canadians and Acadians. It has asked that the signal be available not one month before the games, but rather six months before the games, precisely to permit the broadcast of the cultural and athletic activities that are now part of the Olympic whole. And so much the better!

From what I understand, the signal will be unscrambled just one month before the games. Why didn't you agree for it to be done six months before the games?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** There's a practical issue with unscrambling that long before the events, and there's a commercial issue, quite frankly. It's probably more of a commercial issue. The way it will work is that people who do not subscribe will get the signal for free, as we've described. People who do subscribe will continue to pay. So there's an issue in that someone who is paying may now have a next door neighbour who may be getting it for free for six months. That's one concern.

The other, practical side of it is that all our research and everything we've done really demonstrates that two weeks to three weeks before an event is the optimum time to promote an event. That's when people really sit up and take notice. So to stretch it out beyond that, combined with the commercial consideration I just described, really makes it impractical for us.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I understand the commercial aspect of the matter. I'm talking about the Olympic Games that Canada will be holding and broadcasting around the world.

At that point, shouldn't we be looking beyond that commercial aspect? It is indeed something supranational, and we should be participating and enabling those communities to make themselves better known by agreeing to unscramble the signal six months before the games.

[English]

**The Chair:** Maybe give a short answer, if you would.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** Let me put it this way, as a short answer. It's something we can look at. I think six months is too long. We've agreed to a month. We can think about that.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

We'll now continue with Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the witnesses from CTV for being here today.

What have you done about the broadcast of the Paralympic Games? Because those games will be held after the Olympic Games.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** We are at the final stages with one point, which has now been agreed to. We will be making an announcement that the contract is done. That happened yesterday, basically, so you're hearing it first. That's number one.

Number two, in terms of coverage—

• (1025)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** —in both official languages.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** —what I'm very proud to say is that we're going to be delivering more hours of coverage in both official languages than has ever been done before, highlighted by the fact that the gold medal final, along with all of the sledge hockey, is going to be carried live. This is for the very first time. Understand, there are only six sports in the Paralympics. They're not games the size of the regular Olympics.

We are right now in a process where we kind of have 25 hours in the French language and 25 hours in the English language scheduled.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** But my question is, when it's covered, is it going to be covered in English and French in the same equality—

**Mr. Rick Brace:** Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** —as the Olympics themselves?

**Mr. Rick Brace:** What we've done for the Olympics and the Paralympics is to have two teams. We have the English team and it's mirrored by the French team. So it's equal in terms of the production value, the quality, the number of cameras, and so on.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** How did you come up with a figure of 96%?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** The figures come from a combination of media stats, BBM and Nielsen measurements, and they look at the number of households outside the province of Quebec that are francophone. From that, we deduct the number of homes that have cable or have satellite available to them to which they actually subscribe. Then what remains is the number of homes that are only served by over-the-air.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** All right, these are households. So when we say 7,000 or 12,000, we're talking about persons or households?

**Mr. Gerry Frappier:** These are households.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Have there been any talks on the subject, for example, of an agreement between RDS, RIS, TQS, CTV and the satellite companies to provide satellite boxes to people who don't have them for a period of two or three months?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** No, we really haven't gone that far. I know that's something that would be difficult for them. They simply don't have decoders they could offer for free. I think you heard about the Freesat proposal this morning from the CRTC, and they talked about the \$500 initial cost it would take. So that would be something that I think would be impractical.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Earlier you said that agreements had set a precedent with Radio-Canada, in the case of *La Soirée du hockey*. If I remember correctly, Radio-Canada had its own advertisements on *La Soirée du hockey*.

**Mr. Gerry Frappier:** No. Radio-Canada took the entire RDS signal. There was advertising on the RDS signal. It was the same advertising. A whole signal was transmitted. A single RDS production was broadcast on the two networks. That was done over two years, around 2002 and 2003.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** As my colleague said, it doesn't work anymore. Perhaps there's a reason for that.

**Mr. Gerry Frappier:** That lasted two years and Radio-Canada subsequently decided to withdraw. Since then, we are the only ones broadcasting the hockey as a whole.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** If you consider two weeks of programming without any advertising, there are few people who can accept that. Will RDS or TQS have their own advertising, or will that be CTV advertising?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** It's all the same. It's a consortium. So all of the advertising, both English and French, is sold by a single group and placed. The reason you do that is you have to really protect what we call exclusivities.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Did you suggest that Radio-Canada should be compensated for lost advertising?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** Yes, we did. But we have another proposal today. Maybe this will preempt some of the questioning, because we are prepared. No one has heard this, so this will be brand new for everybody. We are prepared to look at a proposal whereby CBC/SRC could produce their own coverage, but we would have to control the advertising. That, I think, is going a long way from where we were at the beginning. This is on the table. It hasn't been discussed with SRC. It hasn't been put forward anywhere but here today. But in recognition of the issue, in a demonstration of the goodwill we're trying to put forward here, we would be willing to discuss that with SRC.

• (1030)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Thank you, Mr. Brace.

We'll now continue with Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Thank you very much.

The games will definitely be a jewel for Canada, and it's very important that francophones be able to receive them in their language.

I'm the member for a riding where a lot of Franco-Ontarians live. I represent a large official language minority community. As I said, it is important that francophones outside Quebec have access to the games, not only in my riding, but across Canada as well.

However, there are definitely some major challenges. I'm an engineer and a former military member. I like details.

[English]

Much of the discussion we've had so far—not with you, but previously—has been very top-level discussion, so I'd just like to ask you a few questions about some of the technicalities. You've already alluded to them, but I'll just seek to clarify them so we can all better understand some of the challenges that are here, that are facing you on this issue.

One question I have is this. If Radio-Canada were to transmit the games, would it be your coverage simply passing through their system to francophone homes, or is this what you're talking about with production, where they want to get their own reporters in, they want to get their own news desk in, and they want to get their own set-up in?

Is it just carrying your transmission, or is it much more than that?

**Mr. Rick Brace:** You've described it fairly accurately. Yes, our proposal was that they take our feed and put it on their waves.

By the way, I missed saying this: we're talking about outside the province of Quebec. But yes, that's the proposal we made, that they would take our signal, unaltered, do nothing to it; our commentators, the look, everything would be the consortium's feed, produced by Gerry, who by the way, is also—

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Which would be in French; I just want to confirm that you're talking about French coverage—

**Mr. Rick Brace:** It's French coverage. It's—

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** —produced by you. You're trying to say, just carry your signal, just carry your coverage right into francophone homes.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** It's exactly what we did with the Montreal Canadiens, and their concern is exactly as you've stated, that they do not want to have another company's production on their airwaves. They want to produce it themselves, and if they produce it themselves, obviously there's a cost to that; therefore they also want to have the ability to sell the advertising. That, of course, makes this situation completely impractical for us.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Right, but you do say there is a social responsibility as well, and they're a publicly funded broadcaster, so it would be my hope that the financial part of the equation wouldn't be a great stumbling block.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I think in the proposal we made, the first one, where they pick up our signal, there really is no cost. There's no incremental cost. In fact, in that model we offer to compensate for any lost advertising revenue for the signal they were carrying outside the province of Quebec. So it really was, we thought, an elegant solution to the problem. Really the concern they had was taking someone else's production, which, as I say, we created a precedent for with the Montreal Canadiens, so it wasn't something new.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** You were going to cover some of the costs they would incur to transmit your production outside of the province of Quebec.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** To the extent that they lost advertising revenue for shows they would have aired outside of the province of Quebec, we said, "We will make you whole"; so it's not to cover some of it, but cover all of it. That was the proposal, and that's where we started. Unfortunately, it never went beyond that.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Okay.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** You wanted to give them all if it; they didn't want to have any of it.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Another question I have is this. We're often talking about the missing 4% here. As you mentioned, of course, some Canadians don't necessarily have access to any TV—it just depends—but we're talking about the 4% here.

What I want to try to figure out is this. If Radio-Canada does transmit your production, or their own production, however it happens to be—I think I know the answer, but I'm going to ask it anyway—they can't just focus on the missing 4%. I believe it goes out over all of their network. Am I right?

**Mr. Rick Brace:** It would be blanket coverage outside the province of Quebec.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Right.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** TQS would still have exclusivity for the province of Quebec. They were our partner at the bid, so that's just the way it is, and we're proud to have them on board. But we're talking about outside the province of Quebec. Our proposal would have them distribute everywhere outside the province of Quebec, on all their transmitters, the signal that Gerry provides.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** And would I be right that this is probably a major factor, that it's not just a question that the signal will go to the 4% of missing homes? It's that it will go to all homes covered by Radio-Canada? Meanwhile you are broadcasting as well to the other 96% of the homes, and now you've got competing signals, competing advertising. Is that right?

•(1035)

**Mr. Rick Brace:** You wouldn't have competing advertising because we would sell all the advertising.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** That's the way you would like it. I just mean if it were to go the way Radio-Canada wanted it.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** That's right—if it went the way they wanted it to go. Outside of the province of Quebec we have distribution from TQS and RDS, so if they were to sell their own advertising there it would compete directly with the francophone side of the consortium, absolutely.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you for those answers. I appreciate that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lemieux.

We'll start the second round.

Mr. Rodriguez, you have the floor.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning and welcome, everyone.

You mentioned that there was a record number of live coverage hours. I think it was 650 hours. That's very good. You're providing the signal and that's fantastic, but people still have to be able to unscramble it. That's the issue under discussion today.

Two weeks ago in Vancouver, I met people from the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique. They said they were very concerned about francophones outside Quebec being able to receive those signals. You have no bilingualism mandate, do you? You are a private business, a consortium of private interests, and that's not a problem. You want to make money, but the problem is that you're not able to reach all francophones.

**Mr. David Goldstein (Senior Vice-President, Regulatory Affairs, CTVglobemedia Inc.):** Mr. Rodriguez, I think it's important to note that section 3 of the Broadcasting Act concerns both public and private broadcasters. The official languages requirements are not the same for us as they are for Radio-Canada and the CBC.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** You don't really have any restrictions, do you?

**Mr. David Goldstein:** No, not at all.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Ultimately, we have to solve this problem; otherwise you won't be making a good impression. I'm not saying that in a nasty way.

Mr. Brace, I would like to ask you this: what's in it for Radio-Canada? The corporation will be transmitting your signals, but will it be making any money apart from that?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** The answer is no, in terms of money.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Radio-Canada lost the bid and you won it, right? Why would they help you achieve your goals?

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I come back to whether there is a public responsibility and an opportunity here, understanding that we're talking about outside the province of Quebec. During the period of the games there is nothing that will compete with the games themselves; there's no programming you could put on.

Outside of Quebec, as you know, there's a very small number of francophones.

So I think it's a very fair offer. They don't have to make an investment. They can deliver something more efficiently than any other solution we've come up with. Perhaps it's their public responsibility, and today we've gone so far as to say we will permit them to produce it, but we will have to control the commercial inventory,

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I agree with you. Radio-Canada has a mandate and has to carry it out. For our part, we have to ensure that it does so. The fact remains that you got the contract, not Radio-Canada. You're going to make money on this operation, but you're asking it to help you offset your weakness. That's a little strange.

**Mr. Gerry Frappier:** I'd like to provide a few details on profitability. French-language services outside Quebec don't generate a lot of money because the cash value of advertising time relative to ratings generated is relatively low. We're talking about 500,000 or perhaps 600,000 francophones outside Quebec who have the opportunity to follow the games. That represents very low commercial value.

As Rick was saying, regardless of what we present on TVA, Radio-Canada or RDS during the games, people will mainly be watching the games. Outside Quebec, those companies will probably have higher ratings by broadcasting the games than by broadcasting something else. It's in that sense that this is an advantage.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Ratings will be higher, but those people won't be able to sell advertising since you're the ones doing it.

**Mr. Gerry Frappier:** Advertising doesn't have a lot of value outside Quebec, Mr. Rodriguez. It's not the same story.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I understand, but I don't see the advantage that these people would have in increasing their ratings if they ultimately can't make it pay through advertising.

Are you ready to invest money to reach the entire population? Let's take, for example, the freesat system, which costs \$500. Let's suppose we're talking about 10,000 households, even though that's more than there in fact are. If you multiply that number by \$500, it would cost you \$5 million for everybody to receive the signal. Are you ready to do that?

•(1040)

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** We've made a significant investment. We've made what we think is a fair offer, and I think it's time to see if SRC has a response. We'll have to discuss the proposal we put forward today with them.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez.

Now we'll continue with Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen.

We met with the Commissioner of Official Languages, who was dissatisfied and very concerned. We met with VANOC, who told us the same thing. We've just met with the CRTC, which also has major concerns about the broadcast in French. From what they said, 2.5% of the Canadian population won't have access to the Olympic Games, which corresponds to the population of New Brunswick. That's a concern. I hope efforts will be made on other levels.

We've talked about community television channels. Have you had any contact with them? Are there a lot of them? They're very big in the regions. In Gaspé and elsewhere, there are francophones and

anglophones who could have access to the Olympic Games via community television. Have you taken any action in that direction?

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** We've dealt with all of the cable companies, so virtually every region of the country, through our contacts. Whether it be the major cable or satellite carriers or whether it be the members of the CCSA, which is the small system cable alliance, or whether it be with the independents—and I think those are some of the ones that you're referring to—they have all been contacted, either in person, over the phone, or by letter, or through the CCSA, which represents the member group.

To this point in time, we have had a great response. The majors are in. They say they're happy to participate. The CCSA is now sending us feedback. You have to understand that this is a bit of a marathon; it is not a sprint. It takes some time.

So slowly but surely we're hearing back from the distributors out there. As I say, it's an ongoing situation.

I think at this point in time—

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Mr. Brace, we've been told that only one-third of people had been reached to date. 2010 is coming quickly; it's not even a year away. If only one-third of those people have been reached—I'm talking about the independents. There's work to be done.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I'm not sure where you got that information.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Guay:** It was VANOC that gave us that information.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I think VANOC may be a little bit in arrears, because we have made a push.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Guay:** So much the better if that's true. All I want is for people to be satisfied and for us not to look silly around the world because we aren't able to broadcast the games in both official languages in our own country, whereas China and other countries are doing that.

I'm asking you a big question, and I'm not sure you have the answer. Would it be possible to renegotiate with Radio-Canada to convince it to broadcast the games where you can't do it so that everyone can take advantage? It would derive some satisfaction from that. This isn't just a matter of broadcasting and money for you; there is a related social responsibility. Moreover, article 24 of the Olympic Charter states that the games must be completely bilingual.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I have two comments there. First of all, we had to meet a certain threshold in order to win the bid, which we did.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Guay:** We're not challenging that, Mr. Brace.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I just want to make sure that is on the record.

Secondly, I think with what I've said today, we've opened the door for the potential of another discussion. We think we've moved a long way from our original position, and we think what we are proposing is quite fair.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Guay:** They haven't yet answered you?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** No. We haven't spoken with them yet. You're hearing it before they are.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Guay:** All right. We'll know the results of that offer soon. Thank you.

**The Chair:** We've got a scoop, Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I love scoops.

**The Chair:** Ms. Glover.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Welcome to all the witnesses.

Today is Mr. Godin's birthday, and I want to wish him a happy birthday.

• (1045)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** I didn't say his age.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I'm exactly 18 years old; we're all going to the bar tonight!

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

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** And he's having a party!

[English]

I just want to touch upon some of the things you've commented on today regarding your scoop. First of all, when my colleagues are talking about Radio-Canada, on the one hand, they're asking what's in it for them, and on the other hand, they're asking why we don't force them to broadcast. So there are two sides to this very complex issue.

When you respond to them by saying that what they get is actually to have people listening to them during the games, I have to agree with you. I have to agree that they do get coverage. This proposal, this scoop you've offered, not only gives them people who are listening to their broadcast, but they also get to listen to their own commentators, their own sports analysts, etc.

So I think this proposal you've offered today is generous. I think it opens the door. I congratulate all of you for allowing us to hear it today. I look forward to hearing how your discussions go after this.

But I want to know how much it's going to cost them now to produce what you would have already produced and given to them

for free. What is it going to cost taxpayers? What is it going to cost the CBC?

**Mr. Rick Brace:** That I can't estimate at this point in time. This is new. It's something that will have to be determined. But it won't be as efficient as what we first put on the table; there will be a cost.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** The reason I ask is that we all want a very strong Canadian broadcaster. All of us have been fighting for that; every single party is fighting for that. But we are in an economic crisis, and that is why I ask the question, because they are trying desperately to hold onto jobs, and whatnot, and it seems to me that's part of the discussion.

Do we really want to put out these millions of dollars when we're trying to hold onto jobs, when we are being offered, very graciously, this programming for free, which would bring more people to their channels during this very important—

**Mr. Rick Brace:** And that, once again, is why our original proposal is still the most efficient proposal.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Right, and going back to the original proposal, I want to know how much it is costing you to make them whole, because that's what they're getting. That is what CBC is getting. They're being made whole.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** We didn't get that far, because they passed on it out of hand. So we would have to sit down with them and determine the value of that.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Can you give us a guesstimate?

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I can't really.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** I ask because what you're saying is you would have made them whole; you would have given them the revenue they would have lost because nobody was watching the shows they were playing because they were now airing your Olympic coverage. So they were getting something. But you never got past that.

I'd like to know what that answer is. I will ask CBC when they're here. Is there any way you could also do an evaluation? I would love to hear your estimates on that.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** It is probably better to ask them. They will give you an estimation.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** We will.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** We estimated their rate cards. I don't think it would be beneficial or helpful to the committee, because it would simply be a guess.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Okay, fair enough.

Now when it comes to airing for a month or six months before, I appreciate what you've said about it being complex, and whatnot, and I also heard you say you're still going to look at it. I want to thank you for that because I think it's another step forward. I'm not saying that we're going to get six months, but if there is a way to allow our francophone communities to see more of the coverage ahead of time, I think that's important. So thank you again for that.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** It's going to be a case of all of us working together, as I said to the Senate committee, because we're going to need your help. This is a situation where every negotiation is a commercial negotiation. There's a social responsibility overriding this that we're all focused on. But at the end of the day, we have to convince every small cable company to come onboard with us. When it comes to free previews, or the Olympics themselves, it could be different; it could be checkerboard. It's not as if we're doing one deal and one size fits all.

So I just want you to be cautious on that. We may be coming back to ask for your help and support.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** You should know that we're supportive of allowing all Canadians to see these very important games.

I just want to correct a couple of things that I've heard on the record here today. Madame Guay mentioned China's broadcasting. China did not broadcast all of the games in French in their own country. They did broadcast them in Chinese—and that is their language of majority. They broadcast much of them in Canada in French and English, with the help of our broadcasting teams here. I just wanted to correct that.

And VANOC is very supportive. They are very much in agreement that we need to do our best to make sure that as many francophone Canadians as possible can see these games. They've been supportive of your efforts.

•(1050)

**Mr. Rick Brace:** Thank you for your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Glover.

Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is like a chess game. You played your side this morning. There doesn't appear to be that much dialogue between Radio-Canada and you. You've shown your hand to the committee, but the negotiator you're negotiating with isn't here. It's on the air or has a representative here.

You said you already had a proposal and that you weren't here to negotiate, but a good mediator might perhaps be necessary. Point 1.1 states that advertisers' losses could have been offset by CTV, the group. Now they're offering to do their production. If they can do their own production, can they do their own advertising as well?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** No. The answer to that is that it totally goes against the model we have. You can't have two people.... For example, if Coke is one of our sponsors, you couldn't have them selling Pepsi. You'd get that conflict.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Normally, when you see a Coke refrigerator in a store, you don't see a Pepsi refrigerator, and vice-versa. I understand that; that's competition. However, here we're talking about a public sector agency and a private sector organization. Could the consortium offset the losses incurred by Radio-Canada on sponsorships?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** You know, I don't want to negotiate in public. I think that—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Well, you threw the proposal on the table.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** I put the proposal on the table.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You started it.

**Mr. Rick Brace:** No, I put the proposal on the table, and it's something we can discuss. We can start it as a discussion with SRC, but I can tell you that any kind of notion where SRC would be selling commercial time is an issue.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The good news is that the door is still open.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** That's good news. It never really closed. As I said, we go back to our first proposal, which we thought was fair, and we've come a long way.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Yes.

**The Chair:** You're finished, Mr. Godin. We won't ask you your age. You have some time left, but we will acknowledge that you have reached the age of wisdom.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** The age of reason!

**The Chair:** We can hear one or two comments.

Mr. Petit wants to speak.

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Brace, we talked about francophones outside Quebec, but I would like to talk about anglophones in Quebec who are in the minority. I'm not talking about Montreal, but about the North Shore, where, as my colleague from New Brunswick was saying, they don't always have cable. Some people have television sets with what I call rabbit ears. There are at least four or five villages that I know personally in Gaspé, along the North Shore, that have been strictly anglophone for nearly 200 or 300 years.

Is that group covered? Are there any problems? Is it the same thing for francophones outside Quebec? Have you covered that group in your work plan? They want to watch the Olympic games too.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Brace:** In fact, if you have cable or satellite, which many of them do have, we don't need to do it. It's there already. CTV is carried on satellite and cable, so it's there.

The issue is how many anglophone people there are who only receive their signals over the air. It's exactly the same issue that we have on the francophone side of the equation.

To the extent that you have cable or satellite, it's not an issue.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Monsieur Petit.

We are now at the end of our session.

I want to thank our witnesses for sharing their openness and some proposals that will certainly gain some ground.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

Mr. Nadeau, do you want to speak?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. You don't have to answer me immediately, but this could pave the way for next

Thursday. I see that a briefing session is scheduled for June 2 and I see the name of C. Drouin, as well as that of the Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques. What's that about?

● (1055)

**The Chair:** We have some current business. I'll come back to that and I'll give you an answer later. Next Thursday, we will devote a half hour to current business. We can review our program at that time.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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