

**CBC/RADIO-CANADA
AND
SECTION 41 OF THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT***

Introduction

Thank you for inviting us to appear before you today.

- ◆ We are very pleased to have this opportunity in this, the year where we will see the celebration of 50 years of television on CBC/Radio-Canada. In fact this week English Television unveils its 50th season programming and next week, we along with the rest of the industry will celebrate 50 years of television in Canada at the Banff Television Festival.
- ◆ As we primarily meet these obligations through our programming, we are fortunate today to have with us the Executive Vice-President, French Television, Michèle Fortin, and the Vice-President, French Radio and New Media, Sylvain Lafrance, as well as Hélène Gendron, our Senior Manager responsible for this area, to assist with bringing to you a brief report on our activities.
- ◆ CBC/Radio-Canada appeared before the Committee exactly four years ago (June 9, 1998). At that time, the minority official language communities, Francophone in other provinces and Anglophone and allophone in Quebec, expressed to you their concerns over seeing the national public broadcaster forced to reduce services in minority regions to the extent that it could no longer comply with the obligations of the *Official Languages Act*.
- ◆ Since then, we have reviewed our program schedules, we have restructured ourselves, we offer new services and we increasingly resort to new technologies to reach listeners and viewers, no matter where they are in Canada.
- ◆ As the national public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada sees itself as an integral part of the community. In this capacity, we must maintain regular contact with the various regional bodies and with groups and artists in the regions.
- ◆ After the shock of the budget cuts, we took advantage of the period of financial stability offered by the Government to develop new partnerships with the minority communities, and with independent producers from these communities, in order to better reflect the energy and multiple realities of the regions.
- ◆ CBC/Radio-Canada further considers that there is an additional international obligation to make the talent, energy and originality of its artists and cultural groups from the minority language communities known to the French-speaking world.
- ◆ Finally, we continue to multiply joint projects between the regions and between the English and French networks, both on Radio and on Television.

Our track record

- ◆ Without being exhaustive, here are a few examples of the initiatives implemented since that period that in our opinion contribute to the vitality and dynamism of the regions' contribution to French language Television and Radio programming.
- ◆ A few examples of the initiatives taken by Regional English Television and Radio in Quebec to serve the English-speaking language minority will also be included.

Consultations and Partnerships in Linguistic Minority Regions

- ◆ In addition to contacts with community representatives when the Board of Directors meets in the regions, the senior executives of the Media components, Television and Radio, engage in an ongoing dialogue with opinion leaders across Canada.
- ◆ The regional representatives in the field also maintain close contacts with organisations, groups or individuals interested in public radio and television.
- ◆ In addition to their ongoing relationships, French Radio and Television, have pursued and strengthened partnerships with major cultural organisations across Canada. In March 2002, we renewed, for five years, a multipartite agreement between *La Fédération culturelle canadienne française* (FCCF) Canadian Heritage and other stakeholders from the cultural milieu (Canada Council, National Arts Centre and National Film Board of Canada).
- ◆ Such an agreement, which includes an action plan to which the signatories are committed, each in their fields of activity, is one of the cornerstones of the cultural development of the minority language communities, as it is the result of the vision laid down by member organisations within the *Fédération*. It also enables the CBC to participate in the development of the Francophone artistic community across Canada and ensure greater visibility for Francophone artistic expression, throughout Canada and even world-wide, thanks to the relationships maintained with broadcasters in the French-speaking world.
- ◆ Moreover, French Radio, through its agreement with the "Association des radios communautaires du Canada" (ARC), offers news clips and programming to the radio stations that are members of the Association and makes veteran professionals available to train some of their journalists and hosts.

- ◆ For its part, French Television has created a *Panel des régions*, bringing together fourteen influential personalities in their fields, from every region of Canada, including a representative for the Quebec regions, outside of Montreal. Chaired by the Director General, Regional Stations and Corporate Affairs, it is attended by all senior managers of all French Television services. The Panel has already met three times and its impact is being felt. Following discussions it held, a public affairs program was reactivated in the Western provinces, and thanks to this collaborative effort, *L'Accent francophone* will be renewed and improved.
- ◆ The next meeting on the schedule should make suggestions to improve and properly target coverage of stories from outside Quebec appearing on *Le Téléjournal/Le Point*.
- ◆ Finally, we cannot ignore the two projects funded by French Radio and Television within the framework of the Interdepartmental Partnership with Official Language Communities (IPOLC), with matching funding from Canadian Heritage.
- ◆ To support the regional independent production industry, French Television is participating, with Telefilm Canada and the *Alliance des producteurs francophones du Canada* (APFC), in setting up a professional development program for French-language screenwriters and directors living and working outside Quebec. Thanks to this initiative, six Francophone screenwriters and six Francophone directors from outside Quebec attended intensive professional development workshops coordinated by the *Institut national de l'image et du son* (INIS). Other workshops will be organized under the partnership this fall.
- ◆ French Radio, for its part, has linked with the various bodies responsible in Canada's regions for the development of French song and with the organisers of the *Festival international de la chanson de Granby* to create a *Réseau des galas de la chanson*. The *Réseau* was officially formed during the year and a training program for the next generation of songwriters, composers and performers was prepared with the collaboration of veteran professionals, to enable this new blood to be seen, heard and appreciated throughout Canada.

The strengthening of regional action and presence

- ◆ The commitment to the regions of both French Radio and French Television has resulted in concrete actions over the past few years: new investments in journalistic resources across Canada, particularly for coverage of the cultural scene (on TV) and establishment of news bureaus (from Caraquet, New Brunswick to Whitehorse, Yukon, for Television, and in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador or New Liskeard, Ontario, for Radio, among other examples).

French Television

- ◆ French Television's objectives have been to maximise the impact of its regional presence. This commitment is based on the regional reflection on the network's programs and on the identification of regional audiences. For example, the regional on-air identification plan aiming at a better identification of each regional station has translated into the production and broadcasting of short programs at each of these regional stations.
- ◆ It is also seeking to maximise the impact of proximity television. Apart from the stories broadcast on news and current affairs programs all day long, Saturday afternoons, during the regular season, are devoted to a tour of Canada from several perspectives: quiz show on language in Ottawa with *Des mots et des maux*, a look at cultural and artistic life in Atlantic Canada and Ontario with *Brio* and *Expresso*, more in-depth news coverage in Francophone communities outside Quebec with *L'Accent francophone*, discovery of surprising or little-known aspects of the Canadian reality with the young video journalists of *Culture Choc*.
- ◆ French Television's commitment has also translated into an increased investment in the regional independent production industry. The variety series *Un air de famille* and *Pour l'amour du country*, and the youth drama series *Science point com*, are all produced by independent companies operating outside Quebec.
- ◆ The current affairs shows *La Semaine verte* and *Second regard*, in addition to being produced in Quebec City, broadcast a very high proportion of stories filmed outside Montreal. The variety series recorded in Moncton, *Pour l'amour du country*, is aired in prime time. Several special programs attest to the dynamic cultural life of the regions: the Franco-Ontarian Festival, Ontario Pop, the *Fête nationale des Acadiens*, and others.
- ◆ French Television also wants to maximise the opportunities for synergy with partners. We have already mentioned the multipartite agreement with FCCF and IPOLC. In addition, for the first time, French Television was associated with the *Coup de coeur francophone*, an event featuring the upcoming new talent in French song, by producing and broadcasting promos on regional stations to mark the 15th anniversary of the *Coup de coeur* shows and the 10th anniversary of their Canada-wide debut.
- ◆ *Les rendez-vous de la Francophonie* was an opportunity to organise a super-contest *La Fureur de la Francophonie*. In addition to producing and broadcasting a promo on regional stations to advertise the contest, French Television covered the costs of a dozen or so air fares for participants from regions that were too remote or not served by train.

- ◆ French Television considers that it also has a role to play internationally and it actively contributes to the transmission of francophone culture and to talent development within the Francophonie. Several collaborative projects between countries of the European and African Francophonie are a reality, and many are in development between participant countries and regional stations, to produce programs, exchange journalists and train people.

French Radio

The extension of French Radio's La Chaîne culturelle

- ◆ One of the major projects of French Radio, of which many of you will undoubtedly be aware, concerns the extension of La Chaîne culturelle, for which the CRTC granted 18 new licences in May. As a result, there will be the installation of transmitters throughout all the provinces, covering the provincial capitals, by the end of 2003. This project will call upon *Ateliers de création*, creative workshops, to enrich the existing programming and gradually increase the program production of La Chaîne culturelle in the regions. Vancouver and Sudbury, as well as programs produced in Quebec, can already contribute to it. Last January, French Radio celebrated La Chaîne culturelle's arrival in Winnipeg with a concert by the since deceased Sylvain Lelièvre.

Other Initiatives

- ◆ Four years ago, listeners in minority regions feared the disappearance of their regional stations. Since then, French Radio has sought to entrench its coverage: addition of many news bureaus in minority regions, such as Regina, Victoria, St. John's (Newfoundland and Labrador) and New Liskeard among others. Programs on La Première Chaîne, such as *Afrique-Ados*, *La grande traversée* (produced in Ottawa) and *La presse d'un peu partout* contribute to opening many new horizons to local listeners.
- ◆ Regional stations are also very active in programming. The Première Chaîne produces 643 hours each week, 410 hours and 30 minutes of which come from stations outside Quebec. The Chaîne culturelle produces 131 hours each week, 24 of which are from the regions.
- ◆ The increased collaboration of the regional stations with the national network, the repositioning of Radio in Acadia, the exploration of online broadcasting in Western Canada, and the development of new programming initiatives emanating from creative workshops are only a few examples of activities intended to strengthen our regional presence.

- ◆ Some examples of this collaboration by regional stations in 2001 were the development and broadcasting of three daily programs from Quebec City and Vancouver; and six weekly programs with contributions from the Moncton, Toronto, Winnipeg, Rimouski, Ottawa, Trois-Rivières, Windsor and Quebec City stations. We should also note the regular, if not daily, contribution of the regional stations to news and current affairs programs such as *La tribune du Québec*, *Sans frontières*, *D'un soleil à l'autre*, *Les Affaires et la vie* and *Dimanche Magazine*. Coverage of cultural events (book fairs, various festivals or other events) generates year after year a hundred special collaborations by regional stations in programs such as *Au cœur du monde*, *Indicatif présent*, *D'un Soleil à l'autre* and *Bachi Bouzouk*, thus confirming the importance we attach to reflecting every region of Canada.
- ◆ French Radio particularly fosters the promotion and development of talent and is a leader in this field. Radio allocates over \$ five million a year to this purpose. The consolidation of its role involves targeted activities such as cross-programming with ARTV and French Television, the creation of specialty channels on the Internet, the appointment of a Director, Music Production, the development of new partnerships with cultural organisations and private industry, and the strengthening of international cultural content.
- ◆ Aware of its dominant role in the development of Francophone talent, French Radio reviewed its activities and, during the past year, took concrete measures to better target its actions. The aim is to give local artists and craftsmen the benefit of the best possible showcase for their talent to develop and evolve.
- ◆ The increase in international cultural content via exchange and twinning programs with Europe and Africa (such as Ottawa-Brussels, Regina-Liège or Edmonton-Grenoble), the development of new partnerships with various local cultural organisations (such as the agreement with FCCF or *Le Réseau des Galas de la chanson* via IPOLC), and cross-programming with ARTV and the arts and entertainment departments of French Television all help to emphasize our leading role in the creative field, in developing the talent of local artists across Canada and in the rest of the world, are a few examples of the many actions led by French Radio.
- ◆ Youth programs are also a particularly important aspect for French Radio's mandate with programs such as *Afrique-Ado* and *275 Allo 275-Ado-Radio* that provide a forum for young people to express themselves. In terms of the next generation, a program such as *Bande à part* rally the young around new musical trends.

New Media

- ◆ « *bandeapart.fm* », the Web pilot launched last year, continues to be in a class by itself with its innovative programming and its action of promoting and broadcasting emerging talents in alternative music. This service is a unique showcase for broadcasting new musical trends. Partnerships were established with France and this service was launched officially in Paris, with great success, during *La Semaine de la francophonie 2002*.

- ◆ This is a thoroughly innovative initiative demonstrating our commitment to integrate new experiences, thanks to the Internet and its applications. This interactive site makes it possible to reach a younger audience wishing to hear alternative musical genres, which are not broadcast in the conventional media.
- ◆ This example serves to illustrate CBC/Radio-Canada's commitment to the new media and their immense potential for the development and blossoming of Francophone language communities living in a minority situation. The new media continue to be a credible, independent and non-commercial source of information on the Web. They provide a safe place to learn as well as a content of interest for young people. They offer an attractive and entertaining site and a diversity of Canadian content in French. They serve as promotional tools and showcases for cultural life in Canada. They provide a high profile image in promotion and offer a complement to Radio programs by disseminating multiple platforms. They make the public broadcaster known to the rest of the world via the Internet portal. Finally, they offer world showcases for Canadian regional stations as well as to artists and craftspeople from here.
- ◆ The new media ensure a balance in radio offering, making French Radio ever more attractive in an increasingly competitive universe. They allow us to be proactive in our strategy to serve Francophones across Canada, to increase audiences, develop listening habits and build closer ties among Francophone communities outside Canada. The new media consolidate production spaces and processes to remain on the leading edge of technological innovation while bringing closer together linguistic communities living in minority situation.
- ◆ In conclusion, we would like to mention the presence of five Francophone channels among the thirty or so channels offered by Galaxie, the continuous music service.

The Anglophone and Allophone Minority in Quebec

- ◆ This overview would not be complete without a brief mention of the impact of the regional programming of English Regional Television and Radio in Quebec. When we appeared before you four years ago, the English-language minority community in Quebec, and especially those living outside the Greater Montreal region, seriously feared that the regional afternoon drive-home radio program would go off the air completely. They also feared that journalists covering the regions would cease to be an on-air presence. We are referring to communities located in the Eastern Townships, but more particularly those spread along the North Shore, for whom CBC Radio is the only choice.
- ◆ Not only did this dark scenario not occur but the return-home program has been revamped, the journalists are still on air and new initiatives have been and will be introduced. For example, listeners continue to hear the journalist on air in Gaspé, as well as various contributions from the North Shore and the Ottawa Valley. Noontime coverage of events not reported in the morning programs have also been added. Exchanges with French Radio make it possible to hear reports from Rouyn, Rimouski and Western Quebec.

- ◆ In addition, on the weekend of June 8 and 9, CBC Radio Two will go on air in Sherbrooke to serve the Eastern Townships, as well as the Quebec City region. A major launch is scheduled for September as national programs visit these regions to meet the public and celebrate these new stations.
- ◆ New projects are in the works. We will mention only two. They concern talent development and relations with communities. CBC Radio has joined with McGill and Concordia Universities and with numerous groups to develop a series of programs under the title *Montreal Matters*, on themes of concern to the community. This series, in addition to calling upon talent in the community and expertise from the universities, will be produced in collaboration with English Regional Television in Quebec and will include a Web site.
- ◆ Preliminary discussions with the community and with English community radios in Quebec could soon lead to a collaboration, creating links in the Ottawa Valley or elsewhere between CBC Radio and the community radio stations.
- ◆ CBC Radio One and CBC Radio Two obviously continue to produce many contributions for the networks, just as English Regional Television in Quebec maintains its production for the network and Newsworld.
- ◆ In addition, English Regional Television's new Central Canada region, which includes Quebec and Ontario, will add a Manager of Program Development in the next few days, some of whose responsibility will be to increase programming from Montreal and the Ottawa Valley.

Transcultural programming

- ◆ Whether on Radio or Television, CBC/Radio-Canada is vigorously pursuing its policy of *rapprochement* between programming in the two official languages. During the last year, two major series, produced bilingually, were broadcast as a reflection of this commitment: *Canada: A People's History/Le Canada : Une histoire populaire* and *The Last Chapter/Le Dernier chapitre*. This last series is the first dramatic co-production between the English and French Television networks. The six-hour dramatic miniseries was filmed simultaneously in English and French and aired on both networks.
- ◆ Newsworld, RDI and the basic networks also continued to broadcast the youth series *Culture Shock/Culture Choc*.
- ◆ As part of *Les Beaux Dimanches*, French Television aired one of the biggest theatrical successes of the past few years in English Canada: *Le Manteau – The Overcoat*, a show without words also broadcast by the CBC on *Opening Night*.

- ◆ On Radio networks, the main emphasis was on information exchange between the French and English networks. For example, there was the increased participation of Francophone and Anglophone craftsmen to the development of joint programs and the ad hoc contribution of Anglophone or Francophone journalists to one of the components in the regions.
- ◆ Projects like *TransCanada Highway celebrates 40 years/La transcanadienne fête ses 40 ans* or *Race Around the World/La course autour du monde*, which will call upon 20 young Francophones and Anglophones to produce short documentaries on five continents, clearly show the importance the transcultural component has gained in Radio programming.
- ◆ Following pilot projects in some regions, several initiatives are on the agenda for 2002, such as: a series recounting Canadian diversity through interviews conducted in the busiest streets of the country's major cities. Another series is aimed at reflecting on how to build a better world following the events of September 11, 2001 and finally, a project on Africa and the Americanisation of the planet.
- ◆ All this only serves to illustrate the growing importance of the cooperation between our components and between the networks and the regions, French and English, all entities that make up the great institution that is CBC/Radio-Canada.