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• (1100)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 44 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is taking place on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe first nation.

[*English*]

Pursuant to the order of reference adopted by the House on Tuesday, May 31, and the motion adopted by the committee on Tuesday, September 20, the committee is meeting on the study of Bill C-18, an act respecting online communications platforms that make news content available to persons in Canada.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the House of Commons order of Thursday, June 23. Members are attending in person in the room, and those attending remotely are using the Zoom application.

For those at home using the Zoom application, please remember that, at the bottom of your screen, there is a little globe icon, and that is your interpretation icon. You can just click it to turn it to the language of your choice.

Those of you who are here in the room know how to use the interpretation.

When you're not speaking, you should be on mute. Please wait until I recognize you by name before you speak. Click on the microphone icon to activate your mike and on mute when you're not speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

Thank you.

I am ready to entertain the witnesses who are here today.

For the sake of the witnesses, I would like you to know that you have five minutes for your organization, not per person. You can decide who's going to represent your organization. When we finish listening to the witnesses, we will go to the question and answer period.

The witnesses are, as individuals, Peter Menzies and Hugh Stephens, executive fellow, school of public policy, University of Calgary. We have, from APTN, Monika Ille, chief executive officer. We have, from Digital Content Next, Jason Kint, chief executive officer. We have, from Independent Online News Publishers of

Canada, Jeanette Ageson, publisher of The Tye. From the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association are Chris Ashfield and Steve Nixon.

I will begin with Peter Menzies.

Peter, you have five minutes, please.

• (1105)

Mr. Peter Menzies (As an Individual): Thank you for this opportunity. For the record, I am appearing as a private citizen and I'm not a member of a political party.

I worked in the newspaper business for close to 30 years and served as a CRTC commissioner for almost 10 years. I am familiar with how things work. I care deeply for good journalism, which, unfettered by favours owed to politicians—no offence to present company—the privileged and the powerful, can play a helpful role in a liberal democracy.

Bad journalism doesn't help.

Others have articulated how and why Bill C-18 inappropriately places the state squarely in the newsrooms of the nation by giving the CRTC oversight of agreements and directing how the money is spent. Others have mentioned how it may prompt retaliatory trade sanctions. Others have explained or will explain to you why the argument made by news organizations to justify this embarrassing liaison between government and media is, to put it kindly, unproven. Were it otherwise, those promoting it would surely not have felt threatened by open debate.

Still others have detailed the problematic issue—practically and legally—of affixing a value to links and then reserving those only for those of whom the government-appointed panels approve, and you will have heard by now how putting a price on links is likely to incent more gossip and less *gravitas*.

Today I am here to tell you that Bill C-18 is as likely to kill journalism in Canada as it is to save it. The very prospect of it is already perverting news coverage and undermining trust, the commodity upon which the industry depends most. Bill C-18 will permanently entrench the industry's dependency not on the loyalty of citizens, readers and viewers, but upon the good graces of politicians and the ability of offshore, quasi-monopoly tech companies to remain profitable.

As Andrew Coyne, then of the National Post, wrote just four years ago when government was first contemplating financial support for his industry:

The money the government is giving us is not going to solve our problems. It is only going to ensure we put off confronting them. Before long we will be back for more.

And here we are.

The Parliamentary Press Gallery's white paper on values states: "Trust in journalism must be actively earned and maintained". Yet as illustrated in Edelman's most recent survey, trust in Canada's media has never been lower. Sixty-one per cent of Canadians believe journalists are purposely trying to mislead them while 58% think the same of government. With respect, having those two team up doesn't seem like the best idea.

The more government assistance news media gets, the more broken the relationship with readers becomes. The more that relationship is broken, the more subsidies will be required. And so it goes.

I respectfully submit that it would be a grave error to continue down this path when it is independence that earns and maintains trust. Bill C-18 might keep the wolves from the door of a few legacy companies for a few more years but it won't save journalism, and while the amount of money involved may keep some from starving, it will still leave most hungry, needy and assumed to be grateful.

What Canada needs is a policy framework that encourages the innovation required for journalism to sustain itself. An examination needs to ask why, for instance, the CRTC is creating an artificial oversupply by forcing virtually all its broadcasters to dedicate time to news as if we were still living in a 1980s world of limited resources. We need a strategy that values the efforts of the Canadian entrepreneurs who have built close to 100 new news sites. We need to understand the impact of the government subsidizing the CBC to operate the most accessed news site in the country to the detriment of the rest of the industry.

Broadcasters have for decades complained about the unfairness of having their tax dollars used to subsidize a revenue competitor. That perversion of the market now extends to the online world. While a \$1.3-billion subsidy allows the CBC—likely Bill C-18's largest beneficiary—to establish advertising rates that many argue are below market value and offer news for free, others struggle to establish subscriber bases and advertising.

Bill C-18 will only perpetuate a market already distorted by subsidy and it will punish independence.

For instance, while newspapers in Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Calgary will benefit from Bill C-18 money, not one of them directs its own reporter in the Parliamentary Press Gallery, whereas Western Standard, which has declined to submit to government approval, does. There are other examples.

If Parliament values a free press, it will not approve Bill C-18.

Thank you.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menzies. You've come in just under time. Thank you very much.

Now I'd like to go to Hugh Stephens from the University of Calgary, for five minutes.

Go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hugh Stephens (Executive Fellow, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would firstly like to thank the committee for inviting me to express my point of view on this important topic.

[*English*]

Good morning.

I'm speaking in an individual capacity. In my comments I will be speaking in support of this bill.

In doing so I would like to address three criticisms that have been brought against it.

The first is that the measures proposed by Bill C-18 to stem the decline in journalism are taking aim at the wrong target, the large digital intermediaries, on the grounds that they do not benefit financially from including news content on their platforms and even if they do, they are already providing some financial support to some media.

The second is that the ambit of the bill is too broad because its definition of "making available" includes some content that would normally be considered fair dealing under the Copyright Act such as links, headlines and snippets.

The third is that if implemented in its current form Bill C-18 would violate Canada's international trade obligations under the Berne Convention and/or the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement, CUSMA.

I believe all of these criticisms are inaccurate.

I write a weekly blog on international copyright issues and have noted that a number of governments, in the face of fierce opposition from the platforms, had to resort to legislation in order to level the playing field between news media publishers and the larger intermediaries.

In 2014 both Germany and Spain passed laws requiring Google to pay news producers for use of their content. Google's response in Spain was simply to close down Google News, its news aggregation platform, and in Germany to delist any publisher who refused to give Google access to its content without payment. The EU tackled this issue through the creation of a limited two-year press publishers' right. Google and Facebook have since come to the table and struck deals with publishers for access to news. France has been particularly successful in this regard.

We know that when Australia decided to bell this cat, Google and Facebook mounted a vigorous lobbying campaign and threatened to pull out of Australia. Google also tried, unsuccessfully, to get the U.S. government to intervene. In the face of the legislation, however, the platforms backed down and managed to conclude revenue-sharing agreements with most Australian media outlets.

In the United States, Congress is currently debating the bipartisan journalism competition and preservation act, which seeks to do much of what Bill C-18 is aiming to accomplish. I mention these examples to underline that Bill C-18's objective of helping to preserve a viable professional journalism sector by requiring negotiations for compensation for use of news content by the large digital intermediaries is not unique. In fact, it's very much in the mainstream of what's taking place in a number of western democracies.

Another criticism is that Bill C-18's definition of "making available" is too broad because it includes some actions such as linking to content or featuring headlines or snippets that are normally considered fair dealing under the Copyright Act. It's also been argued that posting hyperlinks provides a benefit to news outlets so why should platforms pay? Indeed, news outlets do derive some benefit from the referral just as the platforms derive benefit from using news content to attract more users and thus sell more ads.

Under Bill C-18 the balance of respective benefits will be worked out in negotiations between the parties. But Bill C-18 does not deny digital platforms their fair dealing rights. Putting it another way, their rights under the Copyright Act are not diminished or changed by Bill C-18. However, it will be a violation of the new act if they do not bargain in good faith with respect to making content available. Use of fair dealing exceptions is not a licence to ignore other laws, whether it be the online news act, defamation laws or any other legislation.

Finally, the criticisms that Bill C-18 will violate Canada's international trade obligations, including the Berne copyright convention and CUSMA, leading to potential trade retaliation from the United States, do not stand up to scrutiny. The legislation is drafted in such a way that it does not target U.S. companies but, rather, companies with certain market characteristics of size and dominance. Likewise, it does not seek to protect Canadian digital intermediaries that compete directly with Google or Facebook. In addition, the section on non-discrimination does not impose any must-carry requirements that could violate CUSMA. In the case of Berne, which contains a right to quotation, nothing in Bill C-18 derogates from the quotation right although, of course, use of quotations from news content providers could be a factor in the bargaining process.

Quite apart from not having a strong legal argument to challenge the bill under either CUSMA or Berne, it is highly unlikely that any government, including the U.S. government, would take up a trade challenge under either CUSMA or the WTO. I would be happy to elaborate on why that is the case, if people are interested.

- (1115)

Let me end my comments there, Madam Chair. I look forward to questions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Stephens.

I now go to Monika Ille, chief executive officer of APTN.

Ms. Ille, you have five minutes, please.

Ms. Monika Ille (Chief Executive Officer, APTN): Good morning, Madam Chairperson and members of the committee.

[*Witness spoke in Abenaki and provided the following text:*]

Kwāi! Nd'aliwizi Monika Ille. Aln8ba Sqwa nia odzi Odanak m8wkaw8gan.

[*English*]

Hello, my name is Monika Ille. I'm an Abenaki from the community of Odanak.

[*Translation*]

I would add that I am talking to you from Tiohtiá:ke, i.e., Montreal, on the unceded territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka and the Anishinabe peoples, which was traditionally a meeting and trading hub for numerous nations.

I am the chief executive officer of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, APTN.

APTN was launched in 1999 and was the world's first indigenous national television network. Our work has amplified indigenous peoples' voices and has changed the Canadian broadcasting landscape.

APTN is made available to all Canadians in the basic package of most cable and satellite services. Each year, we offer hundreds of hours of indigenous programming in English, French and 15 indigenous languages.

In April 2000, APTN launched its first national indigenous newscast. In August 2022, we celebrated the third year of *Nouvelles nationales d'APTN*, our French-language national newscast.

[*English*]

Our journalists encourage Canadians to have an open dialogue on Canada's history with indigenous peoples. APTN News brings the voices of indigenous peoples to the forefront, conveying stories on climate change, economic development, indigenous language revitalization, indigenous athletes, sports, art, music and how indigenous youth are leading the way to reclaiming their place on our lands. Our newscast covers the stories that others won't.

In the last few years APTN has received numerous journalism awards such as a Michener Award, Canadian Screen Awards and Canadian Association of Journalists awards.

In 2021, for the first time in Canada's history, production of the federal leaders' debate included indigenous media representation. APTN's journalist, Melissa Ridgen, became the first indigenous journalist to represent a national indigenous broadcaster at the televised federal debate. If it wasn't for APTN and other indigenous media, indigenous peoples would be severely under-represented in mainstream media. By bringing these voices to the forefront, indigenous media teaches the public about what it means to be indigenous by sharing our stories of struggle and also of success.

As viewership is migrating to online and as online news consumption is increasing, it is essential that APTN and other indigenous news outlets receive support from dominant digital news intermediaries and that we receive fair compensation for our news content. We support the principle and intent of Bill C-18.

To the extent that we have a concern, it is to ensure that indigenous news media is properly reflected in the bill. For example, clause 11(1) of the bill deals with the types of agreements digital news intermediaries need to reach with the news sector to be exempt from the more formal final offer process. Intentionally or not, it creates a kind of hierarchy of Canadian news services. Diverse news outlets, including those serving indigenous communities, are last.

I suggest we need language in the bill to ensure that any agreements with digital news intermediaries involve a significant portion of indigenous news outlets and meaningfully support their sustainability in the same way the bill supports local news outlets.

Kchi wliwini. Thank you. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

• (1120)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Ille.

The next witness is Jason Kint, chief executive officer for Digital Content Next.

Go ahead, Mr. Kint.

Mr. Jason Kint (Chief Executive Officer, Digital Content Next): Good morning, Chair Fry.

I'm here on behalf of DCN.

DCN is the only trade organization exclusively focused on the digital future, and dedicated to serving the unique and diverse needs of high-quality digital content companies that manage trusted, direct relationships with consumers and advertisers. Our members include more than 60 media companies and thousands of brands, including news organizations, ranging from local to national to international, such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, The Philadelphia Inquirer and The Financial Times.

I am pleased to express our full support for Bill C-18, the online news act. As you know, the online news act follows enactment in 2021 of a very similar bill in Australia, the news media bargaining code, which DCN also strongly supported. I closely followed your hearing on Friday, including the testimony of former chair of the Australian competition and consumer commission, Mr. Rod Sims. I believe there's no greater witness in evidence as to the strength of

your bill than the experience that's already happened in Australia. At a time when parliaments from around the globe are investigating, and learning from each other on how the duopoly of Google and Facebook have captured nearly all growth in digital advertising, draining the lifeblood of the local news press, it's critical we learn, and then build and improve on each other's work, as you will be doing here by passing Bill C-18.

Recognizing you're already familiar with the details of the bill, I will briefly list what I see as the most important elements, and I'm happy to take any questions on the broader market.

As background, I have nearly 30 years of technical and operating experience in digital media, having spent nearly two decades running highly trusted digital content businesses, even writing code in the early nineties at the advent of the web, before transitioning into my current role, advancing the future for trusted content brands.

I'll now go to Bill C-18.

First, the law will help rebalance bargaining power. Publishers' brands are proxies for trust in value. The inclusion of news content from premium publishers has certainly played a large part in developing the daily search and social media habits of Canadians, allowing Google and Facebook to become dominant gatekeepers. The lack of protection and negotiating rights for the content, coupled with, importantly, nearly unlimited access to the data of the web for microtargeting advertising, has led to a market where publishers and their content have become interchangeable commodities. An expensive and vitally important news report can be reduced to the same value as a copy piece of amateur work or aggregated content.

The online news act will protect a publishers' intellectual property rights, and provide balance in negotiations with online platforms to receive fair compensation, and thus promote a free and plural press.

Second, the bill under consideration relies primarily on the market to determine how and how much publishers should be compensated for their content. This flexible approach allows for diverse publishers to seek deal terms specifically tailored to their business needs. Some start-up publishers may want to forgo revenue in favour of audience reach, while established publishers may want to ensure maximum return for their high-value brands. Thus, we do not support a government role in setting rates for content. The bill's final offer arbitration is an elegant solution to accelerate negotiation towards a fair deal at a time when it may likely determine how many journalists can be employed for the coming year.

Third, the bill applies only to a situation in which there's a significant power imbalance between the news publisher and the intermediary platform. Importantly, the news publisher retains the option of whether it even wants to participate. The dominant platform does not.

Fourth, in no way, shape, or form does this change the structure of the web, or in any way demand payment for links. This is, frankly, misinformation that we spent many late hours rebutting in Australia, as Google and Facebook's favourite advocates suggested the law would break the Internet. Two of these advocates shared commentary to this committee on Friday. Nevertheless, the Internet is still working as well as ever in Australia.

Fifth, this is important, the bill permits publishers to bargain as a group. As I was pleased to learn from Mr. Sims on Friday, the small publishers who collectively bargained in Australia received more payment per journalist than the larger publishers. That's exactly the framework we seek to bring new resources to the local and emerging press media.

In summary, the bill creates a new duty to bargain for intermediary platforms, and it permits publishers to bargain as a group. These two provisions form the linchpin of this bill. We've already seen this work in Australia.

The ability for trusted and valued premium publishers to have an equal playing field is critical to the permanence of Canada's news marketplace, and we at DCN urge the House of Commons to advance this bill.

Thank you.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I now go to Jeanette Ageson, publisher of The Tyee, Independent Online News Publishers of Canada, for five minutes, please.

Ms. Jeanette Ageson (Publisher, The Tyee, Independent Online News Publishers of Canada): Thank you.

My name is Jeanette Ageson. I am the publisher of the independent online news magazine The Tyee, based in Vancouver. Since 2003, our non-profit newsroom has worked hard to build sustainable revenue to support in-depth public interest journalism. Today, we employ over 20 journalists and media workers.

I am here today not just representing The Tyee, but also to present the concerns of over 100 similar companies.

The independent online news publishers of Canada coalition includes local news outlets, English and French news outlets, indigenous news outlets and news from diverse voices. Collectively, we employ thousands of journalists and reach millions of news readers, viewers and listeners across Canada.

We are the new generation of the online news in Canada, and we have serious concerns about the online news act, a bill that is supposed to exist to benefit organizations just like ours. In May, we came together to publish a joint open letter, which some of you may have read. We are here to ask you to consider amending and strengthening Bill C-18. Our concerns have to do with transparency, fairness, eligibility and the exemption clause.

The first up is transparency. If these deals between big tech and publishers are allowed to remain confidential, it will make it harder for smaller publishers to negotiate fair deals and make worse Canadians' mistrust in the media.

Canada is facing not one news crisis, but two. One is financial. The other is the crisis of distrust. Canadians are expressing unprecedented distrust towards the news and the reporters who deliver it. Canadians need to know who is funding the news they receive and on what terms. We need to rebuild trust in news, not damage it further.

Allowing deals to remain confidential also puts smaller publishers at a disadvantage in the bargaining process. In the first day of hearings last week, we heard many speakers express concern that smaller publishers who are filling the gaps in communities will be left out. In response, we heard that smaller publishers in Australia are happy with their deals, and that the intention of Canada's process is to ensure fairness between newsrooms.

While we appreciate the assurances, we see nothing in the legislation that guarantees us the tools we need to achieve and independently verify an equitable outcome. In order to fully participate in this process, we need complete and timely information about the deals between news organizations and tech platforms that they are agreeing to.

Bill C-18 also needs to be amended to ensure fairness. As it currently stands, the intervention into Canada's journalism industry by big tech is already under way, with some publishers having struck secret deals with the platforms. However, if you are not a newsroom that has been hand-picked by these platforms, it is unclear how one would seek such a deal, what the terms are and what is considered fair compared to other organizations, and we do need legislation to address that.

If nothing is done, Google and Meta will continue to strike uneven deals on a case-by-case basis that favours the largest legacy news publishers, based on formulas they don't have to share or deals based on which news publishers lobby the hardest or criticize tech companies the loudest. Over time, these uneven deals will determine which news organizations survive and which ones die.

Google and Meta cannot be allowed to decide the future of Canada's journalism industry. We believe a universal funding formula should be applied consistently to all qualifying news organizations, based on how much money each organization spends on editorial costs.

We need to amend Bill C-18 to prevent barriers to innovation and entrepreneurship. We need to help entrepreneurs who have been risking their own money to serve their communities with news and who otherwise will be excluded and penalized because they risked their own money.

If a journalist starts a news company and they do the work of reporting and/or editing, they should be counted towards qualifying criteria. We should be encouraging hundreds more micro newsrooms to fill our news deserts, not disincentivizing people from launching them. Currently, these newsrooms are shut out of Bill C-18.

Finally, Bill C-18 needs to be amended to keep big tech out of our newsrooms. Under Bill C-18, tech companies will receive exemption orders by assuring government that the money they pay to news publishers is being spent properly on news content: on local news, on diverse news and on innovative news. Those are all worthy goals, but let me be clear: Google and Meta should have no role in our newsrooms and no authority to determine or make promises about what kind of news we cover or how we spend the money.

These exemption order conditions represent a fundamental threat to the independence of the Canadian press. They also don't specify whether a tech company must strike deals with three newsrooms or 300 to qualify. Within that uncertainty lies the possibility that hundreds of qualifying news organizations will be shut out. Instead, we ask that exemption orders be removed from Bill C-18 or modified to minimize these potential threats.

Our coalition has prepared a detailed brief containing specific language for these amendments, which should be circulated to each committee member. The stakes for the free press in Canada—and our democracy—could not be higher.

Thank you. I'm prepared to answer your questions.

• (1130)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Ageson.

We'll now go to the final witness, the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association.

Mr. Chris Ashfield (President, Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association): Thank you for giving us the opportunity to appear before the committee today.

Here's a bit of background. I'm a fourth-generation newspaper publisher and the publisher of five community newspapers in southeast and south central Saskatchewan, the oldest of which has been publishing since 1893.

In the more than 100 years that my family has been involved in the newspaper industry, never has it been under such peril. Yes, there have been moments throughout history that challenged our industry, but nothing like we are seeing today.

Steve and I are here today speaking on behalf of the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association, SWNA. However, the issues are similar in all three Prairie newspaper associations—AWNA, SWNA and MCNA—that represent almost all community newspapers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. That's approximately 200 publications. Our memberships range from small, independent ownership to titles owned by Canada's largest newspaper publishers.

Protecting public interest journalism is critical, probably even more so for our smaller remote and rural communities. The importance of locally generated journalism cannot be underestimated. In

western Canada—we are sure it is the same in all rural and remote parts of Canada—it is the local newspaper that protects democracy and reports on the current affairs of the community it serves. It is also important to point out that the community newspapers are, in most cases, the only record of history for most of these communities.

Today, we have come to advocate on behalf of the independent newspapers across the Prairies. We believe that it's important to have a good understanding of the existential crisis facing small, independent community newspaper publishers, and that Bill C-18, the preferred solution for large publishers, may do little to address the financial distress of small publishers. Just like Canada's largest media companies, they too have seen the advertising revenues that once supported their newsrooms steadily diminish as revenues get displaced by digital platforms that focus on target marketing strategy. These are primarily Google and Facebook, now known as Meta.

It is important to understand that we do not believe there's a single solution for media, whether it be community newspapers, mainstream media or legacy media, as some have been labelled. We may all do journalism, but our business models are widely different and based completely on what best serves our individual communities, particularly when you consider the challenges presented by the digital revolution.

It is easy to charge that media has failed to transition to digital platforms. It's exceedingly difficult to pull that off in markets of less than national or global scale. In other words, what may work for The Globe and Mail with its national audience is not going to work for most community publishers. They simply do not have the scale or the population to generate much, or any, revenue in the digital world modelled on using clicks. A clicks and eyeballs method of sustainability will not work for small community media.

We cannot overemphasize how serious the situation has become for community journalism. Advertising revenues have declined to the point where most community newspaper publishers are operating with a skeleton staff, leaving the publisher-owner to absorb the extra hours in workloads themselves.

The quality of journalism is suffering because the revenues are no longer there to pay sustainable wages to our reporting journalists. Pandemic supports made the difference between life and death for many publishers at the time. However, they have now been scaled back or eliminated completely, while advertising revenues remain severely depressed. Communities are on the verge of losing their newspapers and with them the coverage of their municipal councils, school boards, sports and cultural events and all the independent local news coverage residents have relied on for decades.

With respect to Bill C-18, we are encouraged by the success of a similar bill in Australia, especially when it comes to the smaller community media. Community journalism is under threat with the digital revolution, yet there is no model for smaller communities to join that will maintain the level of community journalism that is required to protect local democracy and continue to record the history in hundreds of communities across the Prairies.

In closing, we insist that Bill C-18 include provisions that allow for a collective bargaining model for community newspapers, should they deem themselves unable to negotiate on their own.

Thank you.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Ashfield.

I want to congratulate all the witnesses. You all came in under five minutes. That was great. That gives us a lot more time for questions.

I'm going to begin the question and answer session. The first round is six minutes for questions and answers. We need to be very clear and try to be as succinct as we can, so we can get in as many questions and answers as we would like to.

I will begin a six-minute round for the Conservatives and John Nater.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us here today. I thought that was a good swath of information presented by each of the six individuals and organizations represented on today's panel.

I want to start with Mr. Menzies appearing here today.

Mr. Menzies, I see that you're wearing your orange shirt. I would note that at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, the sales from those shirts, I believe, go to the traditional knowledge-keepers program that's operated at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. I want to note that and the good work that's being done there.

I want to turn to your expertise—30 years in newspapers, 10 years with the CRTC—and it's that CRTC angle that I want to touch on. You appeared before us on Bill C-11. You talked to some of the unintended consequences that might happen with Bill C-11. I'm wondering if you have similar concerns about Bill C-18, some of the unintended consequences that may flow from a bill such as Bill C-18.

Mr. Peter Menzies: I do. In terms of Bill C-18, the fact that it directs any money from this commercial agreement to have to go to news is certainly well intended, but if this is a commercial transaction between two willing parties, what business does the CRTC or the government have, for that matter, saying how it will be spent? If a news company wants to spend it on new computer equipment or they want to paint the newsroom, they should be free to do that.

The other thing is that the CRTC tends to get bound into certain subject areas that it prefers and it is, again with good intentions perhaps, supposed to promote. If you look at the CBC's recent licence

renewal, you can see that in terms of certain designated groups that it's supposed to promote.

All of those have good intentions, but you could end up with companies wishing to please the CRTC or the CRTC feeling pressure to make sure money in newsrooms is spent on certain topics, and they might be good topics, but it's frankly none of their business to have.... An independent press spends its money on whatever it wants.

Mr. John Nater: To follow up, you mentioned the CBC licence renewal, and I think we all know the significant length of time it took for that renewal process. We see the government now sending that back to the CRTC to revisit that, but I want to touch on the CRTC's capacity to deliver what is being asked of them in this piece of legislation.

The legislation itself does give the CRTC discretion on different matters. Some of the phrases are "The commission is of the opinion that", "where the commission considers reasonable", and these other types of challenges where the CRTC is provided with that discretion.

There are two angles. Do you believe the CRTC has the capacity to actually do what is asked of it? Also, do you think it's appropriate that the CRTC have some of this discretion that is being granted to it within this piece of legislation?

Mr. Peter Menzies: First of all, the CRTC is going to be a very busy place these days. There's a search on for a new chair. The initial search had to be extended, so the incumbent has been extended for four months. It will take that new chair a year to organize the place the way he or she wants. You have all the stuff from Bill C-11 coming through. I'm not sure if there won't be things coming through from online harms legislation to come soon, and then you have this. It's not an area in which it traditionally has expertise. I would think that we would be better off just for the CRTC's role—if anybody had a role, and it doesn't need to be the CRTC—to confirm that, if you're going to go down this route, both parties are happy with the agreement, end of story.

The terms of it need to be no one's business if it's a purely commercial agreement. If it's a public subsidy, then the terms of it need to be everybody's business. That goes to what Ms. Ageson was saying. We need transparency. Is it a subsidy? If it's a subsidy, then everybody needs to know everything. It looks like a subsidy to me, the way it's structured, because the government is directing how the money should be spent. If it's not a subsidy and it's a commercial agreement, then it's nobody's business.

• (1140)

Mr. John Nater: I appreciate that. And that gives a segue to ask a question of Ms. Ageson.

You mentioned in your commentary, as well as in your open letter of May 31, some of the concerns, some of the changes that you thought ought to be considered, including the idea that the threshold may keep out certain start-ups and the basic role that could be dictated by the tech giants in terms of what the funding could be used for.

Do you think there ought to be a clear indication in this piece of legislation that removes that discretion, that ensures that the government or the CRTC or frankly the tech giants, for that matter, are dictating changes, dictating what could and should and ought to happen?

Do you think there should be that clear prohibition within the piece of legislation?

Ms. Jeanette Ageson: Are you referring to the tech platforms being able to assure the money that they are providing is going towards certain kinds of coverage and editorial expenses?

Mr. John Nater: Yes, it's that angle from that side, what happens within the newsrooms, but also from the CRTC and the government's standpoint of who's eligible to even participate in the program to begin with, to ensure there is not that ability to pick and choose who can and cannot participate.

Ms. Jeanette Ageson: To the first point, I would support removing that provision, that it's up to the tech platforms to assure that money is being spent in a certain way.

I just don't understand how that relationship would exist without there being a further imbalance of power between the publishers and the tech platforms without having to make that information available and without us being able to make good business decisions about how to best run our organizations.

The point about the eligibility is meant to reflect what's actually happening—

The Chair: Ms. Ageson, could you bring this back when you have another question to answer, because Mr. Nater is now 39 seconds over his time.

Mr. John Nater: It was a wonderful 39 seconds.

The Chair: It was a wonderful 39 seconds. We agree with that.

We now go to Ms. Hepfner for the Liberals.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Thank you.

I would like to direct my questions to Mr. Kint in the room here.

Thank you very much for your time today. I'm wondering if you can go back to this idea of the imbalance of power and explain how this happens. How do the tech giants like Facebook and Google use their access of power in this marketplace in terms of the editorial decisions they make and the algorithmic decisions they make?

Can you go into that? Is that clear?

Mr. Jason Kint: Absolutely. Thank you for the question.

Especially over the last decade, what we've seen is that increasing strength and market power. We've tracked it from a dollars' perspective. They're getting sometimes 80% to 90% of the incremental growth in digital advertising. Literally for every \$5 billion the market grows, \$4 billion may be going to Google and Facebook. Then the question becomes why.

The two companies collect more data than any other companies across the web and across our lives, so they have access to our locations, they have pixels and tags across most of the web. They are

constantly able to harvest data and use that data to target advertising, which no individual company can do.

Much of that time it's against consumers' expectations. They don't want to be tracked as they're browsing the web, but it gives market power to Google and Facebook in a very unique way. Google is able to extract more value out of that by controlling much of the design of the web. They have the dominant operating system, the dominant browser, and importantly—and they're under lawsuits for this around the world—they have the most dominant buying and selling platforms for advertising, so on both sides of the market they are also extracting power.

• (1145)

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Should we be concerned about this access of power?

Mr. Jason Kint: Absolutely.

You have a lot of discussion for the downstream harms, and that can be everything from censorship and bias to privacy, to where the actual dollars are going. I think it's across parties. I see it in the U.S., too. Upstream, it's the market power that is the common concern, and that's what needs to be addressed.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: We've heard a couple of times even today that Bill C-18 would affect journalistic independence somehow, that the government would somehow have more influence on news publishers, or Facebook and Google might have some power to direct news operations.

Can you speak to that? From my perspective it's actually the opposite, because this is a bill in which news producers negotiate directly with the tech giants. Government and the tech giants are left out of it. It's purely a business decision.

Can you go into that a little bit?

Mr. Jason Kint: That would obviously be a huge concern if that existed, but I don't see that at all in the bill, and I didn't see it in Australia, and it didn't play out that way either.

The role of the CRTC is administrative in terms of if it gets to a certain point. More than likely it won't even get to a final arbitration type of deal if it plays out like it did in Australia. It's the threat that compels them to negotiate and use the market indirectly by laterally negotiating or collectively bargaining with the platforms.

It doesn't give Google and Facebook any more power, which is almost comical to argue; they could have more power than they do right now anyway. On the government side, the government has a pretty limited role, and they are in no way dictating rates, and that's where we would be very concerned. It uses the market, and that's what's so elegant about it.

I just really commend that you've built on Australia here and you've improved a few things.

Ms. Lisa Hefner: Thank you. That's an excellent segue, because we do have the example of Australia. We have this legislation. It's in place. We've seen what's happened, and yet we're still seeing a lot of.... I mean, we heard today that this bill is as likely to kill journalism as save it. But we have an example. We have evidence. I'm wondering why we're seeing all these disaster scenarios going around.

I'm wondering if you could talk to the tactics that some of the tech giants have been using around the world, including in Canada, including in Australia, to disseminate their point of view.

Mr. Jason Kint: Yes. We've seen that play out in all those areas.

We've seen Google use their actual gatekeeping power to spread that information. On Search and on Gmail, they'll use their gatekeeper choke points to tell consumers and creators that this is going to break the Internet, or that this is going to be bad legislation. That's a problem. We see private forums, closed-door, and Google has something each year called Newsgeist that uses Chatham House rules and is practically off the record. They will actually have sessions. They had a session about Australia, where they had a professor, like you did on Friday, who spread misinformation that was false. It didn't play out the way he said it would in Australia.

That's powerful, and they use significant money. I mean, in the U.S. we've seen almost \$100 million reportedly being spent to try to stop our antitrust legislation that has bipartisan agreement in the U.S. The only thing holding it back is being introduced to the floor. They use their power across the market in all sorts of ways.

In the case of Facebook, I'd even say they've used it to avoid having to have their top executives come and testify in front of parliaments and in front of the public, which they did here in Canada and in the U.K., when they were summonsed to come and testify—Mark Zuckerberg and so on.

Ms. Lisa Hefner: Thank you. I think I have only 30 seconds left.

I'm wondering, Ms. Ageson, if I can ask you about your concerns about eligibility. We heard in our last meeting a suggestion that rather than changing the terms of eligibility, the Canadian government should offer more incentives so that more platforms can come online and become eligible and hire more journalists.

From my perspective as a former journalist, we need more boots on the ground. We need people out there at the meetings, talking to people and digging up the information, not just more people publishing their opinions online. It's a lot cheaper to just publish an opinion. I think that's part of why we've seen a decline in people's assessment of journalism.

I'm wondering what you think of this idea: Keep the eligibility the way it is, but offer more incentives so that small or online organizations can qualify eventually.

The Chair: I am so sorry, Lisa. We've run out of time. We're going to come back, and I'm sure you can follow through on that.

Yes, Mr. Nater.

• (1150)

Mr. John Nater: Madam Chair, I think there would be agreement to hear just a brief answer on that.

The Chair: Well, if we keep going over time, you're not going to have enough rounds, guys.

Mr. John Nater: I've got extra time, and I do think there's interest to hear that answer.

The Chair: Listen, I am sure...if Mr. Kint would have enough time to answer when somebody else asks him a question.

I'm sorry about that.

We go now to the Bloc Québécois and Ms. Desbiens for six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to say hello to everyone this morning. I am honoured to be replacing my excellent colleague, Martin Champoux.

Thank you to all our witnesses. Your testimony is always relevant and extremely useful. It is a pleasure to hear your points of view which will help us in our work.

My question is for Ms. Ille, the chief executive officer of APTN. Ms. Ille, I would like to congratulate you yet again on the quality of your network's productions and your immeasurable contribution to our understanding of indigenous topics. This also increases Canadians' and Quebecers' knowledge, and I am grateful.

You mentioned earlier that Bill C-18 will also have an impact on broadcasters. That is interesting. The content that you produce is of a wide-ranging nature. Your images, your messages and your content could therefore be found on the platforms of the Internet giants. Actually, this is already happening.

What impact could Bill C-18 have on your organization's total budget? Would you see an increase in funds? Could you give us an idea of the amount and tell us how this would help you in terms of content quality and your organization's development?

Ms. Monika Ille: Thank you so much for your kind words for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. I am most proud. We acknowledge them with pleasure.

It goes without question that we support Bill C-18.

APTN needs money. Our network is included in basic cable packages, but we need more funds, just like everyone else.

I know that our news content is well received and becoming more and more popular. Over the last year and a half, we realized that people were accessing more and more of our news on our website, www.aptn.ca, or on Facebook. They are doing so in order to get an indigenous perspective on news items that are about indigenous peoples.

As to how APTN will benefit from Bill C-18, the answer is we don't know. We don't have an agreement in place at the moment and we have not been contacted on the matter. We still don't know if we will be able to negotiate such an agreement. I find that the necessary information that would allow me to answer your question is lacking.

However, the way that the bill has been written does not lead me to believe that indigenous media is being given a prominent spot. I think this is extremely regrettable, especially given the efforts made to pass Bill C-11, which now recognizes indigenous media. It would be wonderful if Bill C-18 also recognized indigenous media and was more inclusive of Indigenous peoples rather than merely mentioning at the end that indigenous points of view should be taken into account.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you for your answer. That helps me to understand things a bit better.

It is obvious that we are not able to establish the financial impact that Bill C-18 will have. However, would you be able to tell the committee that you are fairly certain that you will reap substantial benefits?

Ms. Monika Ille: I don't know if the benefits will be substantial. In terms of financial impact, I can say that there will be some. It remains to be seen how much and how negotiations will take place.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Do you find the idea of grouping together smaller companies appealing?

Ms. Monika Ille: That is an excellent question.

I have thought about this a lot.

That could be advantageous. I wonder, however, if a formula will be established for companies. I believe that Ms. Ageson spoke earlier of a fair formula for all. It would be great if there was a formula. Otherwise, if everyone has to fight their corner, we wonder what will be the final outcome.

A lot of questions remain, and I can't provide any answers as to how things will play out. One thing is certain, however, and that is if I can get a positive result for APTN, that would be terrific.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you.

I now turn to Mr. Ashfield, whose situation is most interesting.

In my riding, Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, there are many small local newspapers that have less than two full-time journalists on staff. I think that small newspapers are important because, as Mr. Ashfield stated earlier, they publish news on a more local scale, news that is relevant and meets residents' needs.

Can you tell us about the very real threats that will loom for this type of business if they are not included in Bill C-18?

• (1155)

[English]

Mr. Chris Ashfield: In Saskatchewan, the outcome would be fairly detrimental to a lot of the smaller publications. The newspaper industry has changed. Most of the work is now being done by the publishers, who are multi-tasking.

In my own operation, I run five newspapers, but each newspaper has anywhere from a part-time reporter to one full-time reporter. Under the current situation, we would not qualify for that. We don't qualify for things like the local journalism initiative fund because we don't have two full-time reporters. Without amending it to allow for smaller operations with perhaps one reporter, or even a part-time reporter, it will have a financial impact on us.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Mr. Ashfield.

That is what the reporter and editor of *Autour de l'Île*, an Île d'Orléans newspaper, that some of you may know:...

[English]

The Chair: We are going to have to cut this off at the moment. Thank you very much.

Everybody's getting a little extra 15 seconds, because Mr. Nater set the scene for an extra 15 seconds.

I think you're now over time. You've gone 15 seconds over time.

Before we move on, I have heard from the interpreters that there is a bit of a problem with regard to the microphones of a couple of our witnesses, Mr. Menzies and Ms. Ille.

We would like to have a quick suspension so that we can fix that. Thank you.

• (1155)

(Pause)

• (1200)

The Chair: I think we're ready to resume, and we will now go to Mr. Julian.

Peter, you have six minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is so nice to have you with us again.

[English]

Thank you to all of our witnesses. It's very compelling testimony.

I'd like to start with you, Mr. Ashfield.

I have two relatively quick questions to start.

First, you mentioned a newspaper in Saskatchewan that's been published since 1893. It would be great to know which paper you are referring to.

Second, you mentioned in your testimony that you are presenting what I understood to be a similar position for the Manitoba Community Newspapers Association and the Alberta community newspaper association. Could you confirm that as well, please?

Mr. Chris Ashfield: In respect of your first question, with the publication that's been published since 1893, it's the Whitewood & Grenfell Herald Sun newspaper. It was published as the Whitewood Herald for about 115 years.

Approximately five years ago, I purchased the Grenfell and Broadview newspapers in neighbouring communities and merged them into one, just because of the demographics and the dynamics of the industry. That paper has been publishing since 1893. At the time that I merged them, it was actually the oldest continuing weekly newspaper in the province, meaning that it was the oldest paper that had run under the original name from its start-up.

My family has actually been involved—

Mr. Peter Julian: I'm really sorry to interrupt. I have limited time. It was just a quick question.

My second question was on Manitoba and Alberta.

Mr. Chris Ashfield: I'm sorry. Manitoba and Alberta have similar concerns, but I'm not actually speaking on behalf of Manitoba or Alberta. However, we do communicate with them, and they do have concerns that are similar to ours.

Mr. Peter Julian: Would it be fair to say that all three community newspaper associations—we certainly heard from the Quebec Community Newspapers Association as well—are in favour of Bill C-18, if there is a guarantee that there will be supports going to the local level and that we have a similar outcome to what happened with Country Press Australia, where 150 community newspapers were supported through that fund?

Mr. Chris Ashfield: Yes, that is correct.

We are in favour of it, with a few amendments, such as some of the concerns that Jeanette also mentioned with the confidential deals and the fairness and things like that, to make sure that small publications are benefiting from it as well.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you. I certainly appreciate that.

I note that with those four community newspaper associations, that represents more than half of all the Conservative members of Parliament. I certainly hope they take that under advisement as well.

[Translation]

My question is for Ms. Ille.

Other committee members have highlighted the importance of APTN, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and of the quality of their shows. I have had the honour on several occasions of being on APTN's shows to discuss issues such as housing and reconciliation. The network offers tremendous quality, and you do fantastic work.

[English]

That being said, do you feel that the issues around indigenous people and indigenous communities are fully outlined in Bill C-18, or would you like to see amendments and improvements that ensure that not only APTN but also other indigenous broadcasters and indigenous publications...that there are going to be the supports we're all hoping for to bolster that sector?

Ms. Monika Ille: Definitely. There needs to be a recognition of indigenous news organizations within the bill. The way it's drafted, we're just included in a large...and the idea of diversity is at the way end.

What we bring is often underestimated in the news industry. By telling the stories our way, we bring stories at another level. We push them further, and we often put them into context so that non-indigenous people understand our struggles and our issues.

We would hope that this bill would be in compliance with UN-DRIP, article 16, which says that "Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages..".

APTN has been consulted, and we've shared our concerns. Canadian Heritage has told us that they are looking into this and they want to find a solution. They definitely want to be more inclusive of indigenous media organizations and that it complies with UN-DRIP as well.

I know that's been shared, and I hope to see that.

● (1205)

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you. If you could share any information that you have specifically addressing amendments with the committee, that would be appreciated.

Thank you for that.

I'll move over to Madame Ageson.

You've been very clear on the exemption orders and very clear on ensuring clear benefit to smaller news organizations.

You've also talked about the importance of transparency. Could you elaborate a bit more about what you would like to see changed in the bill to ensure that transparency?

Ms. Jeanette Ageson: Certainly, and a lot of this has to do with the CRTC acting as the arbitrator, and it has to do with regulations that I don't think we've seen fully yet. Instead of relying on the judgment of the arbitrator, we would like access to complete and timely information so that we can make our own assessment of whether we are getting a fair deal that is commensurate with what some of the larger publishers with more bargaining power have access to.

I understand that the collective bargaining process is meant to achieve this, but from what I understand, that means it's only if you are within a bargaining unit that you will get access to information about what is being negotiated for the publishers. For various reasons, we may want to create separate bargaining units, so what we're asking for is the ability for publishers to have access to information between bargaining units.

Mr. Peter Julian: You of course have mentioned the issue of the two employees, of freelancers part time, as Saskatchewan has as well.

The Chair: I have given you a bit of leeway. I am sorry, but you have come to the end of your time.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you for the extra 35 seconds, Madam Chair.

The Chair: You've been given the Nater extension.

Now we're going to go to the second round. This is a five-minute round. It's going to start with the Conservatives.

Ms. Thomas, you have five minutes, please.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you.

My first question here goes to Mr. Menzies.

First off, I just want to thank you so much for taking the time to be here with us today to shed light on this piece of legislation.

In April, you wrote an article about Bill C-18. You said:

...this is legislation that was initiated at the request of poverty-stricken newspaper publishers and wound up being, to put it kindly, the world's most audacious attempt to pick the deep pockets of online entities.

We often hear the government justify exerting more control over the Canadian media in order to create a level playing field. In your opinion, I would be curious as to whether or not Bill C-18 actually creates a level playing field. Or does it pick winners and losers? What would your response be to that?

Mr. Peter Menzies: The point I was trying to make here really is that the current playing field is not level. It perpetuates an unlevel playing field. Really, what Canada needs.... Bill C-18, very broadly, is a reaction to a particular situation. It's not part of a broader policy framework, which is what the country needs in order to get through a period of transition. Maybe it's part of it. Maybe it isn't, but the current playing field is not level.

The CBC gets subsidized. It's fine to have a public broadcaster that's subsidized, but if you're going to have it compete commercially with everybody else in a world in which news has moved and will be inevitably entirely online, that's not helpful. The CRTC plays a role as well.

This, on its own, is not going to help. It's going to create, as I tried to say, more mistrust, and it's not going to end well.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Menzies.

I want to pick up on something that Mr. Kint said. He said that this will not demand in any way "payment for links". However, when asked on CTV's Evan Solomon show, the minister, Minister Rodriguez, actually said the following:

Because there's a value to that. If you click on the link and go to the news, there's a value...".

He was asked with regard to the commodification of links, and the minister seems to be confirming that in fact there is a value that can be attributed to that.

Now, you've written extensively on this, Mr. Menzies, in terms of the harm or the danger of going in this direction. I'm wondering if you would care to elaborate on that.

• (1210)

Mr. Peter Menzies: Well, I think if you get into, first of all, links, I don't understand how there can be a value to links, particularly given, albeit a different situation, that the Supreme Court has already spoken on that—that there isn't a value to links—and then you reserve it only for newspaper links. I mean, why don't I get paid per tweet, right? Why don't I get paid every time I post of a

picture of my grandchildren on Facebook? Why don't I get paid for my links? This sort of reserving it for this area is not a good idea.

The other thing is that links themselves don't necessarily create the best long-term behaviours for media. Media build their integrity one story at a time, but not by one story. If you create a situation where they're earning revenue by the amount of linkage they can get, or clicks, you're incenting rash judgment, I believe, in newsrooms. Newsrooms maintain their integrity by being trustworthy over a long period of time. If you're incenting behaviour that creates untrustworthy behaviour in the short term, it's not helpful.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Menzies, you've suggested that Bill C-18 will actually inhibit journalistic independence and will actually make newsrooms more partisan in nature, which is part of what you're talking about right now. It's that trust and accurate reporting.

I'm wondering how you see this playing out.

Mr. Peter Menzies: I'm not sure it will make them more partisan. It will make them be seen to be more partisan. Once you're dependent on somebody other than yourself, whether you're dependent on Facebook, on Google, or on the government in power.... Let's face it, governments do change and the people who today think the media is toadying up to the Liberal government will at some point in the future believe that they're toadying up to somebody else.

It doesn't really matter whether they are or not. What matters is that people won't believe them.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menzies.

We've gone over time here and I'm not extending the Nater extension to the second round. Thank you.

Now we have Michael Coteau for the Liberals.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank all of the witnesses joining us here today.

I'm going to ask Mr. Kint if he has any response to Mr. Menzies' comments.

Mr. Jason Kint: "Links" is an exhausting, tiring talking point that's been fed, in particular, by Google. The word "links" doesn't appear anywhere in the bill.

What matters here, and it mattered in Australia, is that the entire legislation is built off the imbalance in bargaining power that exists. That's what it's anchored on. Yes, in the multi-year investigation Australia did and the U.K. has done, etc., they describe that platform power. In it, it's mentioned that they provide access to content, but the idea that any payment for links is dictated is just hogwash.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you so much.

I'd like to ask some questions of the CEO of APTN.

Ms. Ille, specifically around the relationships between the big tech giants and an organization like APTN, do you currently have a relationship with the big tech giants?

Ms. Monika Ille: We have no relationship with Facebook or Google, but we do have a relationship with YouTube.

Mr. Michael Coteau: How do you feel about these deals that have been put forward by big tech giants and other publications? Does it feel like it's not a balanced approach to what's currently happening?

Ms. Monika Ille: That's a very good question and it's very tricky to answer. We have not been approached; we have not approached them either.

We know, like everybody knows, that deals were made with the larger news outlets. I'm trying to figure out where APTN fits in this overall picture. We are a national network. We have our six days a week news in English and one a week in French. We provide numerous news stories that would definitely benefit from being on those big platforms and...being fairly compensated for the work we do.

I don't feel that it's a level playing field right now. I'm trying to see how this bill will benefit us in reality once it is enacted.

• (1215)

Mr. Michael Coteau: I've always respected the work that your organization has done, specifically around child protection, child welfare and accountability. I think it's a much-needed voice in Canada. I want to say on the record that I have really appreciated the work you've done in the past as an organization.

If we don't make any changes, what does the trajectory look like for an organization like yours? If nothing was done, if this bill wasn't introduced and if we just kept going forward, what do you think the future would look like?

Ms. Monika Ille: I definitely think we need to be compensated for our news stories. More and more we're getting traction. Like I was saying, people are watching our stories. They want to have the indigenous perspectives on what's going on in Canada.

Facebook and Google are where people are going. We've noticed—just us, as followers on social media—that Facebook is the number one for us. We have people coming to really consume our stories. It would be great if we could have something from that to help us continue to grow indigenous storytelling and grow indigenous journalists.

We have way more to do. We're a very small team, but we could do way more.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Your content is uploaded to Facebook, through your organization or others, but no compensation relationship applies, based on the revenue Facebook would pull in from advertisement with your content.

Ms. Monika Ille: Right now, no, we don't have that.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Finally, you said the bill would be strengthened if there were specific language around the importance of organizations like yours and the indigenous voice. What would that wording look like to you, and where would it be within the bill?

Ms. Monika Ille: Certainly, there are various places where we could put it, but I just alluded to paragraph 11(1)(a), which talks about the exemptions. We just talked about indigenous communities, and that's the only time the word "indigenous" is noted in this bill.

If we talk about the need for indigenous news, the importance of ensuring there is a significant portion of indigenous stories in news outlets, and the sustainability of indigenous news.... This just shows the importance, I guess, of the big techs needing to understand how important indigenous news is.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ille. Perhaps we can expand on that the next time around.

I will now go to Ms. Desbiens for five minutes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Ashfield, I have another question for you, on the topic that we broached earlier.

I want to bring your attention and that of the committee to a phenomenon that concerns Île d'Orléans and a small local newspaper called *Autour de l'Île*. There is a writer and composer from Île d'Orléans who is quite famous in Europe. I'm talking about Félix Leclerc. He lived on the island and is a local icon. A small newspaper, *Autour de l'Île*, enjoys an international presence because a large number of Europeans read it because of the link with Île d'Orléans and Félix Leclerc.

Perhaps some of your small newspapers also have such a celebrity following. Are you aware of this phenomenon and the associated concerns? If the newspaper were to fold, the link with the international community would disappear as well.

• (1220)

[English]

Mr. Chris Ashfield: I'm sorry, but I lost you there for a bit. What was the question?

The Chair: I'm stopping the clock until we get this sorted out.

Would you like to repeat your question, Ms. Desbiens?

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I'm going to try to speak a bit more slowly for our wonderful interpreters. Perhaps that is the problem.

There is a famous person who lived on Île d'Orléans. A small newspaper, called *Autour de l'Île*, which only has one reporter on its payroll, might have to fold if we don't bring a small amendment to Bill C-18, to include print media that employ only one editor or reporter.

Because of Félix Leclerc's celebrity status as a writer and composer who is well known in Europe, the newspaper in question is read not only regionally but also internationally. The newspaper might fold if print media who employ only one reporter are not included in the bill. This situation is worrying for us.

Have you witnessed this type of phenomenon over the course of your journalistic career?

[English]

Mr. Chris Ashfield: Yes, I think you would see that most community newspapers have a reach far outside their own community, though the majority of it is within that community.

Speaking for myself, I've seen how national incidents in the last couple of years, within our coverage area—such as the death of an RCMP officer on duty and the discovery of unmarked graves at the Cowessess First Nation—have pushed people to our websites. We've also had other media turn to us for photos, information, contacts and things like that.

Even though we're a smaller publication, we have national and international stories that do periodically happen. They don't happen all the time, but for our local readers—

The Chair: Mr. Ashfield, I'm sorry. Our time is up on this one.

I'll go now to Mr. Julian for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I have a very quick question for you, Ms. Ageson. How many of the members of your coalition, the Independent Online News Publishers of Canada, are currently not covered by Bill C-18 without amendments?

We have talked about freelancers, owner-journalists. How many of the members of your coalition right now would not be covered by Bill C-18 unless those amendments are brought in?

Ms. Jeanette Ageson: That's a very good question. We haven't done the breakdown, specifically, on the size of organizations included on the list, but we do have a list available on the open letter that we signed. That would be a good idea to look at.

Mr. Peter Julian: Yes, it would. If you would be able to furnish that information to the committee, I think it would be very helpful to us. Thank you.

I'm going to go to Mr. Kint.

Thank you very much for coming here.

You've talked about the dominant platforms. In my area, the online companies have devastated our local news sources. I saw the death of two of the four weekly papers and cutbacks in publications. I represent two communities that cover a third of a million people and yet the number of local news sources fell in half.

How important is it to stop that hemorrhaging of local media and ensure that we have a sound foundation for the future? How important is it to counter the disinformation that we're seeing increasingly on the online platforms?

Mr. Jason Kint: It's vitally important. I think it's one of the most important aspects of this bill—like in Australia—and this bill will accomplish that. The collective bargaining aspect of it is the critical piece. That's the linchpin, as I described it.

At least what I've heard from Australia is that these smaller publishers—we heard this in testimony on Friday—are receiving more funding per journalist than the larger publishers, so that goes directly to local.... I've also heard that 25% to 30% of their wages is now coming in through this new funding. That's significant, and that's significant to high-integrity information, high-integrity brands that are trusted locally, and that also combats disinformation. It's critical to democracy.

Mr. Peter Julian: These are important figures: 25% to 30%, nearly a third, of wages being covered. What you're saying is that if

we don't do this, if Bill C-18 isn't adopted, that hemorrhaging that I described will continue.

Mr. Jason Kint: It will absolutely continue.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Julian.

I think, Mr. Kint, that's the end of your time slot here.

I now go to the Conservatives.

Mr. Waugh, you have five minutes.

• (1225)

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm going to go back to the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association, if you don't mind.

You represent 56 members. You do know that with Bill C-18 you need two full-time employees in the newsroom, not at arm's length from the owners or the publishers. So, out of the 56 newspapers that you represent in my province of Saskatchewan, how many would be eligible for funding out of Bill C-18, and how many would not be eligible for funding out of Bill C-18? Can you give me those numbers?

Chris or Steve.

Mr. Steve Nixon (Executive Director, Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association): At this stage, we have about four publications that have been able to access this type of funding. Most of our members would not meet this requirement.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Four out of 56...and we're going to save the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association. So, if there are no amendments made to Bill C-18, despite what our friend from the NDP has said here at committee, this really does no good whatsoever for the weekly newspapers in Lanigan, in Lloydminster, in Langenburg, and others.

I have looked at your page. You know, I asked a question last week about The World-Spectator in Moosomin. How much money would it get if this bill passes? Nobody has been able to tell me what that newspaper is eligible for.

Steve, could you tell me if The World-Spectator in Moosomin today would receive any money if this Bill C-18 passes through the House?

Mr. Steve Nixon: They may. It's undetermined. They are skeptical that it would be beneficial to them at all.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: That's my problem with this bill. Rural newspapers, many of them held by Conservative seats in this country, in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan.... That's why I invited you here, because there is a huge flaw in Bill C-18, as mentioned by my Bloc counterpart, in rural Quebec. It is a fallacy led by this Liberal government that this bill is going to save journalism. It's not going to save journalism at all. I know it won't.

I want more information from Saskatchewan. When I look at your 56 newspapers, many of them are hanging on by their bare minimum right now. They don't have two full-time employees in the newsroom. This bill does them no good whatsoever. In fact, I will say this: This bill harms them, because they're competing with big organizations like Glacier in my province of Saskatchewan who may have two full-time employees. This bill actually harms you more than it helps you.

Mr. Steve Nixon: I can't speak ill of Glacier or of any of my members. They are included in those 56. What I would say, though, is that there is an opportunity in the budget of 2022. There's \$10 million for a local journalism initiative. It has to be structured in a way that it can flow out to these small community media outlets.

There's also in the budget \$40 million in new funding over the next three years through the Canadian periodical fund. A significant portion of this needs to go towards these smallest publications.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you for mentioning the \$40 million, but we don't know where it's going to go. Nobody has said where some of that money is going to go. When I look at your 56 members, I'm really worried that some of these will be off the web page here a year from now.

Mr. Steve Nixon: I suspect that this will be the case.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thanks very much.

Madam Chair, I'm going to move a notice of motion, if I can, as I did on Thursday, September 22. I just want to read this, in the few seconds I have left:

That the Minister of Canadian Heritage be invited to appear before the committee, regarding the federal funding provided to the Community Media Advocacy Centre (CMAC) by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

We have Minister Hussen coming, Madam Chair, but it is my wish that we get the Minister of Canadian Heritage here. He has five different departments taking money out of Canadian Heritage. We need to hear from the minister himself dealing with CMAC and the funding of \$133,000.

• (1230)

The Chair: Thank you, Kevin. *[Inaudible—Editor]* discuss this. You've just gone over time a bit, so that's fair enough.

We will now go to Mr. Louis for the Liberals.

This is going to be the last round, because we have to have 15 minutes for a business meeting—

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: A point of order.

The Chair: —and we have a five-minute time slot to get in camera.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: A point of order.

The Chair: Begin, Tim.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: A point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Thomas. I'm sorry.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

Madam Chair, I believe my colleague has just moved a motion, which means that we now proceed to discussing that motion rather than continuing on with the order of questions.

The Chair: All right. I guess that's what we're going to have to do.

Kevin, that did not leave one of your colleagues their five-minute question time, but there you go.

We're going to have to adjourn this portion of the meeting to go in camera to finish discussing that motion.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: A point of order.

The Chair: I'm also going to want to thank the witnesses for coming—

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: A point of order.

The Chair: —and to dismiss the witnesses right now.

Thank you very much—

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: A point of order.

The Chair: —for your time.

Thank you.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: A point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Chair, when I'm calling a point of order, it does need to be acknowledged, according to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.

Right now we are not to move in camera. The motion has been moved in public, and we are to stay in public.

The Chair: Fair enough, Ms. Thomas, but I would like to thank the witnesses, if you don't mind.

Thank you very much, witnesses.

The witness portion of this meeting is over. We're going to move into debating Mr. Waugh's motion.

Mr. Housefather's hand is up.

Ms. Thomas, is your hand still up, or did you forget to take it down?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Yes, Madam Chair. Originally my hand was up to speak to this motion; however, because proper procedure wasn't followed, I had to call a point of order.

The Chair: Ms. Thomas, would you like to speak the motion now?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Can I raise a point of order then?

The Chair: Yes, certainly. It's a point of order, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I'm sorry, Ms. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: No, it's okay. Point of order takes precedence.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I just want to ask, Madam Chair, for you to rule on whether or not this motion is receivable, given that I believe the committee rejected an identical motion at a previous meeting.

The Chair: That's a very important point of order, Mr. Housefather.

Indeed, if I recall, the committee did reject asking the Minister of Canadian Heritage to come to present on this particular topic.

I could move this motion out of order, Kevin, because it has been voted on and dismissed by this committee. I would like to suggest that we do not move this motion forward again because it's been dealt with.

Mr. John Nater: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Nater.

Mr. John Nater: First of all, I think you're referring to something that was done in camera. I think it's inappropriate for this committee to disclose what's done in camera. I would offer that as a caution at this point.

Since you're chair of this committee, I find it troubling that you're now disclosing what may or may not have happened in an in camera session. On that matter, I think Mr. Waugh's motion is entirely within order.

The Chair: I'm going to ask the clerk here to rule on this. It's very unusual.

• (1235)

Mr. John Nater: Point of order, Madam Chair.

The clerk doesn't rule; the chair rules.

The Chair: I know. It's to give me advice. I'm sorry, Mr. Nater.

I'm told that there is merit in your argument, Mr. Nater, so we will now continue to discuss this motion. Thank you.

Mr. Housefather, your question has been answered.

Ms. Thomas, I think you have the floor.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: I want to take a moment to speak to this motion because I do believe that it is very important. Essentially, what the motion is requesting is that Minister Rodriguez, the Heritage minister, come forward to committee and that he grace us with a bit of time in order to discuss the Hockey Canada motion that is currently being undertaken.

That is, of course, what we're discussing. For the benefit of anybody watching this committee or tuning in to it, we are discussing Hockey Canada and its use of funds. Particularly, we want to look at its use of public dollars, dollars that came from taxpayers, went to the Heritage department and then were divvied out.

In order to....

This is not what we're talking about.

Oh, oh!

You are fantastically gracious.

The Chair: I was just about to say that it is about the Community Media Advocacy Centre.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Yes, that's exactly what we're talking about.

I apologize; I am trying to balance multiple things here. Let me begin again.

We are not asking the minister to come with regard to Hockey Canada.

The Chair: On a point of order, yes, Mr. Julian.

Mr. Peter Julian: We have been through these filibusters before, Madam Chair. I really have to question relevance when we have members who are not even speaking to the issue.

We just cut off witnesses who I had important questions for, particularly the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association, which seems to deviate heavily from the Conservative line, yet we've had that cut off. Now we have a filibuster on a subject where members are speaking not even to the motion.

I do question the relevance. I would like you to rule on that, Madam Chair.

The Chair: All right. I agree with you that Mrs. Thomas's original statements were not at all relevant to the motion. Therefore, perhaps we will move on to Mr. Housefather. His name is up to speak.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Chair, I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Mrs. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

Madam Chair, let's be reasonable here. I caught myself. Obviously, I recognize that I was off. That was not done purposefully, so for Mr. Julian to jump in and try to score political points is rather inappropriate.

The Chair: Would you like to continue speaking to the motion?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Chair, I would ask for permission to take the floor and speak to the motion at hand.

The Chair: I just said you could do that, Mrs. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: I think we all make innocent mistakes.

The Chair: Please continue. I will allow you to speak to the motion, but we do not have—as Mr. Julian said—a lot of time to discuss this, so please be to the point and speak to the motion on the floor. Thank you.

Begin, Mrs. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome to Ottawa. It's a good place to be.

I wish to speak to the motion with regard to bringing Minister Rodriguez forward on the hiring of an individual who has now been identified as an anti-Semite. This individual was hired by Canadian Heritage in order to provide anti-racism training specifically to the media.

This individual has made numerous posts on social media with regard to Jews and his belief in terms of their value and how they should be treated within Canadian society—and I daresay worldwide. His comments have been grotesque and altogether inappropriate. This individual was hired, contracted and given public funding through multiple avenues in order to pull off this training. It's hard to believe this individual would have gotten through any sort of vetting process, assuming there was one when this hiring decision was made.

As the minister of the heritage department, it is up to Minister Rodriguez to answer for that. I understand Minister Hussen also had something to do with this, in terms of his responsibilities, but, ultimately, it is the head of the department—the minister—who oversees the entire thing. It is his responsibility to answer for this.

Furthermore, it is my understanding that funding came through the CRTC, which the heritage minister directly oversees. It's not up to Minister Hussen to answer for that funding. It is up to the heritage minister, Minister Rodriguez, to answer for that.

For the reasons I have outlined, I believe it would be appropriate and in the best interest of the Canadian public to hear from the Minister of Heritage himself, rather than simply Minister Hussen. For that reason, I believe the motion my colleague Mr. Waugh brought before the committee today carries great weight and should be given due consideration.

I would reiterate that this ultimately comes down to Canadians. Of course, if you simply google it, you will see that there was outrage when Canadians found out, this summer, that money was handed off to this individual, Mr. Marouf, to conduct this training.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of Liberal members were silent. I credit Mr. Housefather for speaking out, having a voice on this issue and advocating for justice. I value his voice and his take. I'm particularly disappointed with the Prime Minister, Minister Hussen and, ultimately, Minister Rodriguez, who took more than two weeks to finally offer a comment with regard to this incident. I thought that was altogether inappropriate. More importantly, it's not just me who thought this. Canadians from coast to coast felt that it was super inappropriate and that this government needed to take action far sooner than it did.

Given the mistakes made and their grave impact on a significant portion of the Canadian population.... No, all Canadians were impacted by this, because we should all be held to a high standard in terms of the way we treat one another. That standard should be modelled for us by the government and by anyone the government contracts. All Canadians were done a disservice by this individual being hired. However, one group in particular was at the point of the sword, and that was the Jewish community in Canada. They should never have been put through that—never.

There is only one individual responsible for answering for this decision, and that is Minister Rodriguez. My fellow colleagues from the Liberal side have a choice to make—they can allow this incident to be answered for. They can bring greater clarity to it through the Minister of Heritage, or they can cover for this mistake and not allow light to be shed on it. If so, they're actually—I would

argue—participating in the unfortunate incident that took place this summer, because then there's no accountability.

● (1240)

There's actually a shielding of the minister. I do believe that, again, it's in the best interests of Canadians to have him come, and to be able to ask him the questions that Canadians would like answered.

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Housefather now.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank my friend, Mrs. Thomas, for her comments. I agree with some of what she said, and not with some of the other parts of what she said.

I agree that it was absolutely outrageous that Laith Marouf and CMAC received any contract from the Government of Canada to perform anti-racism training. The man is an abject anti-Semite, and has made horrible comments about indigenous Canadians, racialized Canadians, French Canadians and many other groups, although the bulk of his comments were directed against Jews. As I said before, the contract should have been immediately terminated.

I think there has been a widespread recognition that the minister has come to, acknowledging this contract should never have happened, and has stated that remedies are needed. There needs to be better training, there needs to be better due diligence, and there need to be revisions to the contract and certification declaration. That is why I believe he's going to come to committee. He should be presenting to us, so that the committee can do its due diligence, and can be satisfied with the changes that are made to this process, so that somebody like Mr. Marouf and CMAC never get a contract from the Government of Canada again.

Where I disagree is that the minister accountable here is Minister Hussen. The anti-racism strategy falls under Minister Hussen. The contract falls under his ministry. I don't want to allot less time to Minister Hussen than he deserves when he comes and presents the changes he is making. Should the committee, after that, feel that other people need to be heard from then the committee can come to that conclusion, but I don't think that's the case. On this point, Minister Rodriguez is not the minister responsible, Minister Hussen is the minister responsible.

As a Jewish MP, I feel that people from all sides need to speak out against this. It shouldn't be Jewish MPs carrying the ball on an issue that directly impacts the Jewish community. We all need to speak out with respect to anti-Semitism and all forms of racism. I think this was a lesson for all of us that when other groups are impacted, we need to speak out even stronger.

I hope we'll all take lessons from this, but I don't think, as I said before, that Minister Rodriguez is the right minister. Minister Hussen is the right minister to come before the committee, and that's the person who should be appearing on Friday. That's what the committee originally had determined.

Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

● (1245)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Julian, go ahead.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you, Madam Chair.

This issue of the Community Media Advocacy Centre is profoundly disturbing. The anti-Semitism that was expressed was appalling. That's why I called for ending the contract when we became aware of the comments, as you'll recall, Madam Chair.

This is part of a broader trend of increased hate, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Certainly with the convoy occupation earlier this year we saw the most appalling symbols—Nazi symbols—flying on Parliament Hill. We saw blatant anti-Semitism. Anyone who supports the convoy—sadly, we saw some members of Parliament supporting those despicable acts and expressions of hate—are people who should be really examining themselves because that was a low period in Canadian history. Of that there is no doubt.

I support having Minister Hussen before this committee and have expressed that repeatedly. I have asked my colleagues to hold off on the idea that we would move immediately to Minister Rodriguez. I want to hear the responses that Mr. Hussen provides. Following that, depending on whether or not we're satisfied with those answers as a committee, I will certainly be more than willing to entertain this motion.

Quite frankly, I feel disrespected that this motion has been put forward today knowing—the member who moved this knew my position on this—that I wanted to get to the first hearing and, after that first hearing, make a judgment and a decision about whether or not to then convene Minister Rodriguez. The fact that this has been put out today in a way that stopped witness testimony that was so vitally important.... The Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba weekly newspapers gave us a cry today for support. They believe that Bill C-18 needs to be amended so that they will all be included. I support those amendments. All 56 of the Saskatchewan newspapers should be included in the supports that C-18 provides.

I understand that they were Conservative witnesses. When that contradiction between the Conservative position and the weekly newspapers became clear, we then had an immediate stopping of that testimony, so I am not able, as a member, to then question Saskatchewan community newspapers about the important stand that they have taken. It is a stand that is contradictory to the Conservative Party stand on Bill C-18. I feel like, as with Bill C-11, we are again seeing a stopping of witness testimony because it raises uncomfortable truths that some members around this table don't want to face.

I'm quite frankly frustrated that witness testimony was cut off and that we now are facing a motion that we've already discussed. It's a motion that I've already clearly indicated my stand on. The majority of the committee has already communicated its stand on it. Instead of waiting until next week, hearing the testimony from Minister Hussen on this very important subject, and then deciding collectively as a committee where we want to go from there.... That is something that has worked very well in the past, Madam Chair, as you're aware.

I commend Mr. Nater, particularly, because he's always been willing to work together with all parties around this committee so that we can find a consensus. Rather than finding that consensus,

we have had witness testimony cut off and we are now dealing again with something that I very clearly indicated I do not want to consider until after I hear from Minister Hussen.

Quite frankly, Madam Chair, I'm frustrated. I'll be voting against this motion if it comes to a vote, but it seems to be more of a filibuster tactic. I deplore that because the witnesses we were hearing today had important testimony and information to relate to us. They were cut off because of the moving of the motion for filibuster purposes rather than any sort of attempt to come to an agreement.

That being said, I will be prepared to look at this motion again after Minister Hussen's testimony. That is when I believe we should be having a discussion about whether or not to convene Minister Rodriguez.

• (1250)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Julian.

Your frustration is duly noted. I think that sometimes when we talk about certain aspects of how our committee functions it should be done on principle and not necessarily on some sort of arbitrary sense of technicality. But here we are. And we're not allowed to speak very much to what went on in the in camera meetings, so I just warn members not to mention that too much. But I do want you to know you have two more minutes left before this meeting comes to an end and I think that—

Mr. John Nater: That clock is fast, Madam Chair.

The Chair: It's fast, all right.

We have two more minutes left and I have two more speakers and we will not be able to come to a vote at all at this meeting if we continue in this vein. I just wanted to give everybody due notice.

The clerk is saying we can go for another two minutes after one o'clock, but that does not give us a lot of time. If everyone is going to want to speak fulsomely to this, we're not going to even come to the vote, and I—

Mr. Peter Julian: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Peter.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Chair, I have a commitment at one o'clock and I will not give consent to extend beyond one o'clock.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

I am hearing agreement on the other side of the room with that.

Mr. Nater, I just wanted you to note, did you want to speak or did you want us to go to a vote on this? You don't have a lot of time.

All right, go ahead, John.

Mr. John Nater: I'll be super brief, Madam Chair.

Just very briefly, no one is saying the Minister of Canadian Heritage needs to come tomorrow, or even next week, but we do believe we need to hear from the Minister of Canadian Heritage on this matter. If it's helpful to find that broader consensus, I would note as well we have invited the minister to appear before us to comment on his mandate letter. That was agreed to by the committee. That was done several months—

The Chair: That is not the gist of this motion.

Mr. John Nater: No, Madam Chair, but I'm saying this in the context of this motion.

That was done many months ago and we haven't yet heard from the minister on his mandate letter, so this is part of it. If there was an opportunity, in an effort to find consensus, that Minister Rodriguez would agree to appear before this committee in the future—and, again, it doesn't have to be tomorrow or next week, but in the nearish future—to comment on his ministerial mandate letter, which is still an open invitation before this committee, I think there might be consensus to see that—

• (1255)

The Chair: That's a totally different issue because we're speaking specifically to the CMAC issue.

Mr. John Nater: Madam Chair, I'm just putting that out there in an effort to find consensus.

The Chair: I know. I hear you, John. That's fine, but that's not the gist of this motion.

Kevin, did you want to speak to this? I know your name is on my list, but we do not have time. We have 30 seconds left.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: We're having trouble to get the Minister of Canadian Heritage here at times, and this is a very good motion. I put the motion on notice last week. I just brought it up today. We have other witnesses coming on Bill C-18, including the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association, so we're going to have time for Mr. Julian to talk about that when they come.

That's it. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Thomas, noting we are now at one o'clock and this meeting should end, do you have something to say you haven't already said, something new to add to this discussion?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Chair, according to my clock it is 10:56 a.m. Mountain Time.

The Chair: Sorry, I'm dealing with the clock in this committee room, please, Ms. Thomas, and not your local clock.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Sure, Madam Chair.

I would just highlight for the committee that under the Heritage Canada website, where you can apply for the anti-racism action program, the application is actually submitted to the Department of Canadian Heritage, to the anti-racism action program, again highlighting that it is under the umbrella of Heritage Canada and the minister of that department is, in fact, Mr. Rodriguez. I don't know why there would be any argument as to whether or not this minister should come forward to this committee and be available to answer questions the members here have, again highlighting they're important questions on behalf of Canadians, because, of course, they have many concerns, and those have been highlighted over the months since this story first broke in the summer.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Thomas.

I have Mr. Lemire's hand up here, but I also want to tell you that I'm going to have to get the agreement of this committee. We've al-

ready heard from Mr. Julian that he cannot stay any extra time. We have now gone past the time for this committee to adjourn. We have not even voted on this motion. I don't really want us to bring this back and waste a lot of time on it again.

Mr. Lemire.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Chair, I would like to remind you of the urgency which with we should start deliberations on Hockey Canada and summon its representatives. If those representatives say they cannot testify on October 4, should they be compelled to do so? Can we summon them to come on October 25? Can we issue a summons to Mr. Nicholson?

These are issues which are very important and on which we will have to make decisions over the next four minutes.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry. We're speaking to the motion here.

Since I have no other speakers to Mr. Waugh's motion, I'm going to call the vote.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Chair, I just will confirm that it is a recorded vote.

The Chair: Thank you.

(Motion negatived: nays 7; yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I would now entertain a motion to adjourn this meeting.

Peter.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Chair, I think the point of Monsieur Lemire is very important. We have received correspondence from Hockey Canada. I believe that we should maintain the subpoena for next week, for next Tuesday.

I wanted to put that forward. I believe we may have all-party support for that.

The Chair: All right, thank you.

Mr. Nater.

Mr. John Nater: On the same point of order, I would agree. That summons has been issued, and I think that we should maintain it for Tuesday, October 4. I would expect that those witnesses be in that seat.

• (1300)

The Chair: Thank you. I'm very glad.

There is one other thing we need to deal with, but we can't do it right now. That is the concept of travel. We have heard from the liaison committee that if we wish to do it, then we should do so. It doesn't necessarily mean travelling abroad. It can mean travelling across the country.

I've heard from everyone. Is everyone in agreement that we maintain the summons?

An hon. member: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you. That's fine.

Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to add one other point where I think there would be agreement. I would like to see the clerk ask Hockey Canada for the draft minutes and notes of the closed-door sessions to be received by the committee by Friday of this week so that we have time to study them before the meeting with the witnesses.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there agreement from everyone around here on that?

Yes, there's agreement.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Coteau mentioned the staff notes, as well, from the in camera sessions. I think there's consensus.

The Chair: Certainly.

I think we have an agreement here.

I would like to entertain a motion to adjourn, please.

Mr. Chris Bittle: So moved.

The Chair: Mr. Bittle moved it. The meeting is adjourned.

Thank you very much, everybody.

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