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# Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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Chair: The Honourable Hedy Fry





## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Monday, October 21, 2024

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

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

I want to welcome you to meeting number 132 of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

[*English*]

Before I begin, there are some housekeeping items.

For instance, I want all of you to read the guidelines that are written on the cards that are on the table. They are there to help us to not get feedback, which creates a problem for interpreters. You need to know where to put your phone, etc., so that it's not going to feedback.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. I want to let you know some points that we use to run the committee.

Everything you do is through the chair.

You cannot take photographs of what's going on here. The meeting is going to be online later on for you to look at.

If you want to speak, raise your hand, or if you're attending virtually, put up the "raise hand" signal, and the clerk and I will try to make sure that we see you in the same order that you've put up your hand. Sometimes we miss you, but there you go. We're going to try hard to do this.

Again, remember that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

We will give the speaker a certain period of time, a moderate amount of time, to speak.

Ms. Tait, I will give you a 30-second shout-out when you have to wrap it up.

For everyone else, it's the same thing. I'll give you a 30-second shout-out so that you know to wrap up what you're doing. Then we will get to the question-and-answer period.

Welcome, Ms. Tait.

I'm seeing you a lot at this committee now. We've become quite familiar with you. I welcome you.

You know all the rules. You've been here before.

I wanted to say that you have five minutes to present. You can go ahead, and after that we will go to the question-and-answer period. I'll give you that 30-second shout-out.

Are you ready to begin?

Thank you.

**Ms. Catherine Tait (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation):** I should say that I'm here with the chair of the board of directors of CBC/Radio-Canada, Michael Goldbloom, who will be joining me in opening remarks.

[*Translation*]

Madam Chair, members of the committee, we are honoured to represent Canada's public broadcaster, an organization that Canadians depend upon to celebrate Canadian culture, and to ensure access to reliable and accurate news and information.

[*English*]

I would also remind the committee that CBC/Radio-Canada operates at arm's length from government, not just in its editorial decisions but also in its financial and operational decisions. This independence is critical to the trust that Canadians place in us.

We welcome discussions about public broadcasting and we believe such discussions should be based on facts. The document we have shared with you sets out the facts about compensation at CBC/Radio-Canada. We hope these facts can help guide our conversation today.

[*Translation*]

We would like to use our time to talk about the challenges facing the media industry in Canada and why a strong public broadcaster is more important than ever.

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom (Chair of the Board, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation):** The challenge is clear; The ongoing crisis in Canadian media is undermining Canadians' ability to keep informed. Fewer sources of Canadian news means a growing influence of foreign-owned social media, which frequently disseminate disinformation and conspiracy theories.

[English]

Earlier this year, Policy Horizons Canada identified the key disruptions facing Canada. Number one is that people will not be able to tell what is true and what is not. How will we as a society solve the big challenges that we face—affordability, housing, climate change, health issues—if Canadians cannot tell what is true?

In this period of enormous disruption in Canada's media landscape, I believe Canada needs its public broadcaster more than ever. CBC/Radio-Canada provides trusted news and information backed by professional journalists, high journalistic standards, transparency and accountability. Our local presence in 60 communities in every region of the country allows Canadians to remain connected to each other and to the country.

[Translation]

According to Léger's Reputation 2024 survey, CBC/Radio-Canada is the most admired media company in the country. It is also Canada's most trusted news network according to Pollara's 2024 Trust in Media study.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** The public broadcaster is also the backbone of Canadian culture. Our budget contributes to an information and creative industry that generates \$73 billion in the Canadian economy every year and provides jobs for 630,000 Canadians.

[English]

Let's not forget the thousands of amateur athletes who would remain unknown here at home and on the world stage if not for the public broadcaster's commitment to showcasing their talent. What better example is there of this than this summer's Olympics and Paralympics in Paris? Twenty-seven million Canadians—that's seven in 10—came to CBC/Radio-Canada to celebrate Canada's athletes. The Olympics gave the lift that all Canadians needed. It was a truly nation-building event.

In other countries, access to Olympic coverage increasingly means paying for it, and coverage is limited to 17 days every other year, but not here in Canada. CBC/Radio-Canada's commitment is to year-round coverage of amateur athletes and to gender parity in all sports.

Despite the challenges, CBC/Radio-Canada continues to meet the changing needs of Canadians. Some 21 million Canadians now depend on our digital services each month for news. Millions are streaming video and audio in English and French across our platforms, and that's in addition to our award-winning radio and television services.

We are serving Canadians. That service is something worth celebrating and, certainly, worth fighting for.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Oh, my goodness; you have done very well, Ms. Tait.

I'm sorry. This is my fault, guys. I forgot to introduce Michael Goldbloom, who is the chair of the board of the CBC. He's here to answer any board-related questions you may have. We talked about it at the last meeting.

We will begin with the questions session.

I will begin with Mr. Kurek for six minutes, please.

• (1110)

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Goldbloom and Ms. Tait, for joining us here today.

Ms. Tait, you were asked to appear before this committee with very specific parameters in the motion surrounding bonuses, or performance pay, as it was referred to by your organization.

In the fiscal year covering 2022-23, Ms. Tait, did you receive a bonus?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** No.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thank you for that. I appreciate your being direct on that.

It is my understanding that there is not a deadline when it comes to a bonus being awarded outside of a fiscal year. Is that your understanding as well?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Are you talking about compensation for the CEO in your question, or specifically about the entire non-unionized employee group?

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** It's specifically related to your compensation.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As you know, the CEO is compensated—

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** On a point of order, Madam Chair, we can't hear Mr. Kurek's audio. He's cutting in and out.

If you repeat the question, maybe we can find out what's happening.

**The Chair:** We would start from scratch. I think we should try to rectify what's happening.

The people on the virtual end are telling us they cannot hear Mr. Kurek's question. He's cutting in and out. That means we may not be able to hear Ms. Tait's answer either.

Can we check that out, please?

I'm going to suspend the meeting while that's happening.

• (1110)

(Pause)

• (1110)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

We will begin again with Mr. Kurek.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Tait and Mr. Goldbloom, for joining us here today.

Ms. Tait, again, I would ask whether you received a bonus for the fiscal year 2022-23.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** No, I did not.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thank you, Ms. Tait.

Mr. Goldbloom, did the board request that the government give Ms. Tait a bonus?

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** The board provides its assessment of the CEO's performance, and we share that with the government. It's for the government to decide whether or not it pays performance pay.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Did the board give the assessment to the government that Ms. Tait should receive a bonus?

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** I think the specifics of that recommendation are confidential, but I would say that the board has been very supportive of Ms. Tait's performance.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thank you, Mr. Goldbloom.

Ms. Tait, I would ask again. It's my understanding that your term will be coming to a close. I believe January 3 is the end of that.

In regard to performance pay bonuses and a severance package, we are in a situation in which Canadians are struggling. The cost of living is making it unaffordable for so many Canadians to afford the essentials. When you look at the bonuses of \$18 million awarded across the CBC, including bonuses averaging tens of thousands of dollars to executives in the organization, your metrics certainly don't seem to add up with the talking points that are provided. As you conclude your tenure at CBC, can you commit today that you will not take a severance package or bonuses for the last two fiscal years?

• (1115)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** You've made several points in that question.

What I would say first of all is that if we're talking about 2022-23, the results of that year are public. For 2023-24, all of the key performance indicators set out and approved by the board were achieved, if not exceeded.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** With respect, Ms. Tait, I did ask specifically about your compensation.

With the range of compensation that is provided, you make more than the prime minister of this country. That's your compensation. To get a bonus on top of that, at a time when viewership is down and ad revenue for your organization is down....

I asked specifically about whether or not you would refuse to take a severance package at the conclusion of your term as CEO.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I believe Canadians would expect that the corporation would honour its commitments to its non-unionized employees as it would to its unionized employees.

I would like to correct the record. Whereas total ad revenues are down, digital ad revenues are up. At the beginning of my tenure, digital revenue was at about \$38 million; this last year it clocked in at about \$100 million.

I think it's important that we have accurate descriptors of what's going on at CBC/Radio Canada.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Ms. Tait, you said that the information is confidential, but that just doesn't work for Canadians. Canadians look at \$18 million awarded in bonuses and the fact that you just spent \$1,000 a night for a hotel room in Paris during the Olympics. As you come to the conclusion of your term, you are being paid more than the prime minister of this country and you refuse today to rule out that you will receive either bonuses—so-called performance pay—or a severance package at the conclusion of your term. Saying that it's confidential doesn't cut it for Canadians. It doesn't cut it for parliamentary oversight.

Again I ask you: Will you specifically today share with this committee whether or not you will refuse a severance package or bonus at the conclusion of your term as president and CEO of CBC?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As I've said, I consider that to be a personal matter. I believe I'm protected by the Privacy Act in that regard.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Ms. Tait, taxpayers pay your salary, as they do for all of us. You can google an MP's salary and you can google the Prime Minister's salary, but here we are discussing \$18 million paid out to bonuses, with \$3 million paid out to executives.

Madam Tait, your own documents show that there are 631 managers at CBC and that 43, I believe it is, are executives. You're defending the average bonus paid out to executives at your organization, which is more than most Canadians make in a year, and you're claiming that it's confidential.

Madam Chair, through you, I would suggest it is unbelievable that Ms. Tait would come before this committee after a very specific motion outlining that answers are demanded when it comes to the compensation received by a public broadcaster. These are taxpayers' dollars that are paying for this organization.

Again, Ms. Tait, I will emphasize and ask: At the conclusion of your term, whether it's for previous fiscal years' bonuses or so-called performance pay, or the conclusion of a severance package, will you refuse those out of respect for the taxpayers who have paid for you to have this role over the last number of years?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I believe I've answered the question.

For the record, I would like to correct some of the errors that the member has articulated.

One is that the \$18 million in performance pay is not dollars that aren't agreed upon well in advance of the end of the fiscal year. We have a rigorous process in place, a process that has been in place for 20 years, Madam Chair. It's a process that is similar to that of other Crown corporations, other government agencies and most private companies. It's a process that is guided by third party consultants, experts who advise us on what we should be paying our executives and our managers.

• (1120)

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** How much do those third party consultants cost?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Kurek. Your time is up.

We'll move on to the second questioner. For the Liberal Party, we have Michael Coteau.

Michael, you have six minutes, please.

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

Good morning. Thank you for being here.

I agree with you that CBC is a trusted voice for Canadians. The majority of Canadians support the CBC. It's a very popular broadcaster. I've said this before, you know: I'm a big supporter of the CBC. I think it serves the public good.

In addition to that, in the day of misinformation and disinformation, we need a good public broadcaster that can get out there and really deliver information that's relevant to Canadians.

I think, Mr. Goldbloom, you said that it is a trusted backbone of Canadian culture, or one of you said that, but I think it is absolutely true.

However, what has brought us here today is the \$18.4 million that was earmarked for bonuses. Before I get into those questions.... You probably remember some of my questions last time. I asked if you'd go back to the board and reconsider the structure, and I'll get into that.

Before I go any further, can you explain the word "bonus"? Explain the process for us. What are we actually talking about? Are these bonuses, from your perspective?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** No, they are not bonuses; they are what we call performance pay.

With regard to the individuals involved—and we're talking about 1,180 non-unionized employees, managers and executives—a portion of their salary is withheld at the beginning of the year.

Let's say you're making \$80,000; maybe \$10,000 is withheld.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** That's in your contract. Your contract says you make \$80,000.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** That's correct. A portion is withheld, and a series of KPIs are established at the beginning of the year.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Can you explain what a KPI is?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It's a key performance indicator. Those are linked to the priorities of our strategic plan. For example, driving digital engagement in the regions is a KPI. If we meet the target,

those people, those individuals, will receive that portion of their performance pay. Seventy per cent of the performance pay is associated with KPIs, and 30% is associated with the person's individual performance. They have a manager who oversees their objectives on an annual basis as well.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I'm going to jump back in for a second.

The last time you were here, I said that considering where Canadians are today, affordability is probably among the top three issues in this country, if not the most important issue. When Canadians see headlines saying that \$18.4 million is going out to top executives within an organization, it doesn't sit well with Canadians, and Canadians are on your side.

The \$18.4 million that goes out to top executives doesn't sit well with Canadians because they see it as a bonus. The way it sounds is that you go out and you do a good job. If you do a really good job, you get some extra money. No matter which way you slice it, it sounds like a bonus. That's the challenge.

The last time you were here, I asked if you'd go back to the board and think about restructuring your system so that it was a little easier for the average Canadian who is struggling right now to support it, because \$18.4 million to executives during hard times is hard for Canadians to process.

Have you gone back to the board and had the discussion? Was there a discussion at the board? Is there any development in that area?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes. With regard to your comments, on June 25 we published a statement from the board of directors. We had a conversation about it, and we agreed that the board would commission an independent study and review of our compensation to ensure that it is in line with standard practice and is fair,

That review has been commissioned and is under way. We will share the recommendations of that review when they become available in the new year.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Are you going to compare your sector to businesses in general or just broadcasting?

• (1125)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** No.

What we do anyway, on an annual basis.... Just so you understand, our salaries at CBC/Radio-Canada are benchmarked already, with the guidance of compensation experts, at 50% of what would be standard. That means 50% of the range of, let's say, an accounting executive or a programming manager.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** How much more time do I have, Chair?

**The Chair:** You have one minute left.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Just to be clear, what we're looking at is Crown corporations, because we operate as a Crown—

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I need to get my last question in. I'm so sorry to cut you off.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** That's okay.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** You said something interesting. There is misinformation from Conservatives around viewership and ad revenue. Your viewership maybe on television has dipped a bit, but your digital platforms and other platforms have drastically increased, and your ad revenue overall, when you look at the big picture, has increased.

Can you just give us a 30-second breakdown of where you are as an organization?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As I said, as Canadians shift from television—linear viewership—they have moved to digital.

As a quick example, *The National* now reaches almost the same number of people on YouTube, Gem and connected TV as they do on traditional television.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Then things are looking good overall for CBC when it comes to ad revenue and—

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I wouldn't overstate that things are looking good, because television ad revenue is down. The entire industry is suffering from what I would call downward pressure because of what's going on in the industry.

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

Now I go to the Bloc Québécois for six minutes.

Mr. Champoux, go ahead, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Tait and Mr. Goldbloom, I welcome you and thank you both.

Ms. Tait, I hope this is your last visit to this committee for this mandate. It hasn't always been smooth sailing for you, but you've always been frank and direct, and you've never shied away from even the most difficult questions.

Performance bonuses were discussed on several occasions. It's a compensation model that needs to be reviewed. Since the minister intends to table a new mandate for CBC/Radio-Canada, I imagine that the question of compensation will be part of this review, and that we'll be able to come back with the data that will be presented to us.

That said, as my colleague Mr. Coteau said earlier, I too am an ardent supporter of a healthy public broadcaster. It's essential, in these times marked by disinformation and the arrival in the media and journalistic world of all kinds of new pseudo-journalistic enterprises. We can also see the absolutely appalling effect of foreign interference, not only in political parties, but also in the news media and those who claim to be news media, notably social media.

What I'd like to do with you, Ms. Tait, is question the criticism of what our public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada, costs. I think

we've already talked about this and put the figures on the table during one of your first visits to the committee. However, I'd like us to make comparisons with other public broadcasters around the world, because these are figures you have at your fingertips.

For example, how much does CBC/Radio-Canada cost Canadians? How much do they have to pay to have access to a public broadcaster, with all the tools you've put in place to adapt to today's media market?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It costs \$32 per person per year.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I see.

By way of comparison, how much does it cost the Australians?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It costs them \$48 a year.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** So you have the list in front of you. We have the same figures.

• (1130)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** We often like to compare ourselves to Scandinavian countries, whether it's their social safety net or their values. I won't ask you for more figures, but in Denmark, for example, the public broadcaster costs \$116 per capita per year, in Canadian dollars. In Finland, it's \$124 a year; in Germany, which is not a Scandinavian country, it's \$141.99 a year; and in Norway, it's \$150 a year.

Isn't there a problem with people's perception, especially those who tend to be critical?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes, indeed.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** How do we counter this kind of perception?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** We try to explain to Canadians that Canada is a vast country, that we provide services in English and French, and that we have eight indigenous languages. Our situation is very different from Germany's, and we have far fewer resources.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** All right.

I'm not saying that the criticism isn't justified. I think that, on the matter of the bonus, the perception is very bad. We agree on that. On the other hand, I think the perception would be even worse if CBC executives and on-air personalities were paid the same as TV and radio stars and executives in the private sector.

So give us an example of what the private sector equivalent of a vice-president of information's compensation might be.

I don't know if you have those figures. Let's take the example of the CEO of Bell, which is a big company after all. What is his annual salary?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** If we're talking about BCE's CEO, it's around \$13 million. If we're talking about my counterpart at Bell Media, it's around \$5 million.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** What would be the reaction—

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** The report we have commissioned will do just that kind of analysis.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I don't even dare talk about on-air personalities. People have the perception that the stars on CBC/Radio-Canada earn millions of dollars, which is not the case. I think only six people earn more than \$300,000 a year. On private channels like Québecor, stars earn two, three, four or five times that. On the radio, it's the same model.

Do you think people would prefer that executive salaries be raised to be closer to the media community as a whole? Or do you think we'll have to keep the bonus model to keep the appearance of relatively low, reasonable salaries, given that these salaries are paid with public funds?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'd like to point out that, even with a bonus, it's less than in the private sector. The total remuneration of our executives is 50% of what it is in the private sector.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Earlier, we talked about executive compensation in countries with public broadcasters. We don't need to talk about the most generous. Generally speaking, how do we compare with other countries?

[English]

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

[Translation]

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As you mentioned, in Australia, the CEO is paid the equivalent of \$1.1 million Canadian, I think.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Okay. So we have a long way to go in terms of perception. If we want to keep a healthy public broadcaster, free of misinformation, we also have a way to go on the issue of populism in relation to these data.

Thank you, Ms. Tait.

[English]

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

I now go to the New Democrats. Niki Ashton, you have six minutes.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Thank you very much.

Ms. Tait, in an email obtained by the media through an access to information request, you wrote that the “defund the CBC” movement is gaining momentum, and it is true, whether it's because of the Liberals, whose threats of a 3% cut across the board led you to shrink your workforce to smaller than it was during Stephen Harper's years, or the Conservatives, who've made it very clear that they want to destroy the CBC.

Canadians want to depend on the CBC. For us in the NDP, it is clear that we need the CBC. We need a strong public broadcaster, but not in the way that you are putting it forward. Under your leadership, executive bonuses are up while job cuts have been endemic. When asked whether or not you regret the almost \$20 million given in executive bonuses this year while jobs were simultaneously being cut, you said you “don't live in regret”, which I'm sure is cold comfort for the workers who have lost their jobs and may no longer be able to live in their homes.

Will you acknowledge that your actions—CBC's actions—to dole out \$18 million in bonuses have hurt CBC's reputation?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** If I may, Madam Chair, there are a couple of points there I would like to correct.

One is the idea that executive bonuses or performance pay is up. The average is more or less the same as it has been in the last 10 or 15 years. Let's be clear that the average across 1,000 employees is about \$15,000.

Number two is that more jobs have been lost during my tenure. I would point out that over the last six years, 90 positions have been lost at the public broadcaster. Every job loss is very hard. Over the previous 10 years, 1,085 jobs were lost. Let us be clear that to paint a picture that CBC/Radio-Canada is somehow cutting jobs in a heartless fashion is not true.

During the pandemic, we were clear—

• (1135)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** With all due respect, Ms. Tait, the question is about something that you have been on the record, certainly internally, as saying, which is that your concern is around the movement to defund the CBC.

Are you concerned that your actions, CBC's actions, to dole out \$18 million in bonuses is contributing to the attacks on the CBC and, frankly, playing into the hands of Conservatives, who want nothing less than to cut the CBC, while the rest of us believe we need a strong public broadcaster? Will you acknowledge that your actions are contributing to the attacks on the CBC?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I would say that the fact that my actions have contributed, as you're describing it, is irrelevant.

What would be more disturbing for Canadians is if the CBC's management and board of directors did not act in a way that was independent and fiscally responsible. We had commitments to over 1,000 employees, and we met those commitments, but we heard the concerns and we have taken action and have ordered a third party review of our compensation policies.

Beyond that, I cannot see how else we could respond without having, quite frankly, caused Canadians to be concerned about the true independence of their public broadcaster.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Ms. Tait, when we talk about the role of a public broadcaster, we need to talk about its mandate.



You're not Bell Media. We had Bell Media representatives in front of this committee, and they made it very clear that they were putting profit ahead of local journalism. CBC has an obligation to ensure that regions across our country, including northern Canada, have the voices they deserve.

There's no better example of the damage that's been caused than the deeply cynical treatment of the CBC position here in northern Manitoba. The last time you came to our committee, you mentioned how pleased you were that the CBC had filled the position. What was not known to us was that it had been filled for two months as a secondment. We no longer have anybody here, after years of not having anybody here.

CBC's mandate is to ensure that somebody services CBC *North Country*. This means that 85,000 people across Manitoba no longer have a voice through the CBC and haven't had one for years.

I contrast that with the leadership of Hubert Lacroix, the previous president, with whom I worked. He listened to our communities. He listened to people saying that we needed a CBC voice, and he made sure that our station stayed open. Under your leadership, we've seen the opposite, with a cynical play at the last committee meeting to say that you had filled the position, when in fact it was only for a couple of months.

My questions are these: What were the bonuses for? Where is the commitment to regional broadcasting when regions like ours are back to being a media desert when it comes to the CBC? What are the bonuses for, exactly, when you're not fulfilling the mandate that the CBC has in terms of regional broadcasting? Why should Canadians believe that the CBC matters when you consistently leave regions like ours in the dark?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'm not sure what the question is, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** You have 35 seconds.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** The question is this: What were the bonuses for, if you're failing when it comes to regional broadcasting?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I would say they are for 95,000 hours of local news audio that were delivered this past year. That's with 7,000 hours per day of video and audio distributed across the country. There are 450 news articles published daily. Fifty per cent of those come from locations like Thompson, Manitoba.

Yes, we filled the position, and the person made the personal decision to move back to live with her partner. That job is up for hire again. It is very difficult for us to find people in those regions, but we're working hard on it.

I'll remind you that during my tenure, we added journalists in Lethbridge, Cranbrook, Nanaimo and Kingston, Ontario.

We have limited resources. We know that for CBC, there are over—

• (1140)

**The Chair:** Please wrap up your answer, Ms. Tait. We're over time here.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** The CBC is clearly not trying hard enough.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you. That's good.

We're going to the second round. The second round is a five-minute round. We will begin with Monsieur Gourde for the Conservative Party.

You have five minutes please, Monsieur Gourde.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Tait and Mr. Goldbloom, thank you.

On a completely different note, Ms. Tait, you took advantage of your personal holiday to participate in the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games. Thank you for representing Canada.

Was this really during your personal holiday?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** On the other hand, a media outlet reports that you charged \$1,000 in accommodation costs for four nights to Canadian taxpayers, in addition to other related expenses of around \$6,000.

Why did you invoice Canadians for \$6,000, when it was during your personal holiday, as you just said?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I was in France for my personal holiday but, during the games, I was working for CBC/Radio-Canada. If you look at all the newspapers, you will see very clearly that there was no hotel room in Paris at a more attractive price than that. It was the official hotel for the games, I was there with the other delegates and I took advantage of all the services, for example the bus, to go to the opening, because there were security problems, in particular.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** I understand, Ms. Tait, but you have just said that you were on holiday and then that you were no longer on holiday. It's important to know the true version of events.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I was on holiday, and that's why I didn't ask CBC/Radio-Canada to pay for my plane ticket. However, when I was at the Olympics, I was working for CBC/Radio-Canada, of course.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** You were there for two weeks, three weeks or a month—we don't know and we don't need to know—and you interrupted your personal vacation to work. Then you asked to be reimbursed for expenses. Okay.

I'll come back to the performance bonuses that CBC/Radio-Canada managers received. Did anyone threaten to quit if they didn't get their bonus? This money was taken from your budget, which is very tight, given the budget cuts you've had to make. You've had to cut back on production, people have lost their jobs and projects have not gone ahead.

These managers are aware that they have hurt people, especially young people, who have lost their jobs. Would some of them have simply agreed not to receive their bonuses this year, in order to allow certain employees to keep their jobs? Did any of them say they'd go work somewhere else if they didn't get their bonus?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Look, I can't comment on individual decisions. What I can say is that we asked our legal department to assess the risks associated with eliminating bonuses. As Mr. Coteau just said, we understood that this was an obligation we had towards these 1,180 employees.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Ms. Tait, there are Canadians, like us, who feel that management could have said this was a year to cut spending and be careful with taxpayers' money. CBC/Radio-Canada had a budget problem. If management had decided not to give a bonus that year, in order to keep as many jobs as possible and proceed with as many creative endeavours as possible, I'm sure all the managers would have accepted it.

Were there really people who were adamant about this bonus, or had senior management decided to give them the money?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** The elimination of bonuses, i.e., incentive pay, would not solve CBC/Radio-Canada's structural deficit problem. So it wouldn't save jobs, because the following year, the same financial pressures would remain.

I had a good discussion about it with the board of directors and, in my opinion, it was much more important to respect our obligations to these employees to keep this talent, given all the difficult years ahead.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Does the money used to pay the bonuses come from budget cuts, or is it extra money? We know that \$42 million was paid to CBC/Radio-Canada the following year.

Did this money come from a supplement paid by the government—

• (1145)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** No, not at all.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** —or does it come from workforce adjustment cuts?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Managing our budgets is a huge job. We're talking about a budget of \$1.8 billion. That's a lot to manage.

So, every year, we set aside part of it for contingent compensation, because these are obligations—

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Ms. Tait, I don't have much time left—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Gourde, I'm afraid your time is up.

I'll now go to the Liberals for the second round. Mr. Noormohamed, you have five minutes, please.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Ms. Tait and Mr. Goldbloom, for being with us today.

Ms. Tait, can you talk about what the CBC performance pay model was in 2014 versus what it is today in terms of its structure and how it's organized? Is there any difference?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Just let me have a look here for my file.

You say specifically in 2014. In 2014, the number of people receiving the performance pay was only 544 as opposed to 1,180. There was a decision taken before my arrival to expand the number of people receiving performance pay because we were having difficulty retaining certain pay bands within the organization.

You need to understand that when I say we are paid at 50% of what the industry pays, that means we have retention challenges, and therefore the performance pay was put in place for a larger group of people in order to ensure retention.

For the—

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** I buy that.

My question is really more about whether you changed the formula of what performance pay looks like versus what it was in 2014.

Is it a completely new system or is the same—

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It's the same system. We have simplified it. We've tried to have fewer performance indicators to make it clearer for employees what they're driving toward, but it is basically the same approach. That's not just since 2014, but since 2007.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** I don't know if you can tell me this, but on an inflation-adjusted basis, are the bonuses now materially more than they would have been in the Harper era on a per capita basis or are they about the same?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** No.

As I said, on an inflationary basis, they would be less. As I said earlier, performance pay has stayed at about \$15,000, on average, per recipient.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** On an inflation-adjusted basis, under the Harper government—under Conservatives—CBC performance pay was, on a per capita basis, more than it is today.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes. I don't have the math on inflation, but yes, it would be marginally higher.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Right. I see.

Can you tell me whether the Conservative Party of Canada has been spending money on advertising on CBC?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I beg your pardon. I didn't hear the question. I'm having trouble hearing.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Do you know if the Conservative Party has been buying advertising on CBC?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'm not entirely sure of that. They certainly can. I believe any political party may buy advertising outside of an election period. That is my understanding of the policy.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Let me help you with that. I believe they have been buying advertising on CBC.

I'm wondering if you can help me square the circle. We hear a lot from Conservatives about defunding the CBC and about it not being of any value to Canadians, yet they are buying advertising on your platform.

Can you help me understand? I'm having some difficulty with this. Why would they be criticizing a platform and a broadcaster and then spend money on it and buy advertising on it?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Well, I would assume it's because we're a very effective way of reaching more Canadians.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** It would seem that way.

Can you tell me about the reach that you actually have now across all of your platforms, relative to what you might have had in 2014?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** We have become the number one digital news platform in the country. We reach 21 million Canadians every month in English and in French.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** You reach 21 million Canadians in English and in French.

Can Canadians access your content for free?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes, our news is free.

• (1150)

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Your news is free, and it is available to all Canadians across the country, from coast to coast to coast.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes, it's from coast to coast to coast.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** What would the impact be if Conservatives were given the opportunity to defund the CBC and Radio-Canada? What would that do to access to news and content for Canadians in rural communities, in Quebec and, I would argue, in indigenous communities?

Could you give us a sense of what that would look like if all of that were to be cut?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It would be devastating. We are the only national media service in the country. It would pose questions of national security. We operate 720 transmission towers across 520 sites. It's the largest network in the country.

Defunding the CBC—if it was only CBC—would mean laying off 3,500 employees. It would mean no local news. CBC and Radio-Canada are co-located in 15 stations across the country. It would mean that those services, especially to French-language minority communities, would be highly compromised, and let's talk—

**The Chair:** Can you wrap up, please, Ms. Tait? I'm sorry, but we've gone over time.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Let's talk about the north and our role in preserving indigenous languages.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I now go to Mr. Champoux for two and a half minutes, please.

Go ahead, Martin.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Ms. Tait, if you don't mind, I'd like to continue in the same vein.

In my opinion, this is an extremely important element of this whole disinformation campaign orchestrated by those in favour of abolishing CBC funding. They're trying to make Quebeckers and francophones outside Quebec believe that the Société Radio-Canada, the SRC, would be spared and that French services would not be affected at all by the measures.

Are you telling us that it's impossible to envision the CBC losing its funding without repercussions for French services?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes, that's right.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Like all the other experts we've asked, who don't fall for populism and misinformation, you confirm that CBC and SRC are interrelated.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** That's right.

As I said the other time, the services are integrated in terms of technology, premises and experts, among other things, but not editorially.

We work together.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Ms. Tait, there are a lot of concerns about disinformation. This is often orchestrated by foreign agents, by foreign nations or by countries like Russia or China, which are suspected of interfering in certain political parties, but also in the media apparatus. I talked about this in the first round of questions.

Did you know that some countries, like Finland, are absolutely impervious to disinformation? The Russians don't even try to spread disinformation in Finland, because the Finns are made aware of this subject from an early age. In the Finnish school system, young citizens are made aware of the dangers of disinformation as soon as they are able to think and think critically.

Do you think the public broadcaster has a role to play in educating people about disinformation?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Absolutely.

As we know, education is a provincial responsibility, but that's exactly the kind of work we do through *Mon actualité du jour*, MAJ, a CBC newsletter aimed at young people, and *Kids News*, on the CBC side.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I don't want to generalize and I don't want to point to any particular media.

Does the arrival of many new sources of information, each more questionable than the last—these are often sources that are openly partisan or politically committed—mean that the traditional news media tend to want to align themselves with positions, to do a little more editorial work, but a little less rigorous journalism? If so, does this worry the news media?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** This is exactly why we need a strong, well-funded public broadcaster. We have the highest journalistic standards and practices in Canada.

[English]

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

I'm giving leeway here to get answers and questions through, so just remember that, but try not to go so much over time, guys. Thank you.

For the NDP, we have Niki Ashton for two and a half minutes please.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you. I want to start with a comment.

Ms. Tait, you referred to some personal details with respect to the reporter who was here in northern Manitoba. I find that unacceptable and frankly irrelevant. The bottom line here is that the CBC has failed to fill the position in any sort of full-time, long-term situation, and I don't think relying on personal details of the reporter who was here is fair game or acceptable and is frankly unprofessional coming from the CEO of a corporation as well. I do hope that the CBC actually does its job and fills the position long term as its mandate requires it to do.

Moving on, True North, is a conspiracy website that has denied the genocide of indigenous peoples in Canada, has peddled all sorts of conspiracy theories, has done interviews with the leader of a banned white supremacist group and has also sat down with a number of Conservative MPs, including the leader of the Conservatives, Mr. Poilievre.

In one such interview, Mr. Poilievre argued to defund the CBC, which is no surprise. He's talked about this many times. He's even quoted as saying "I can't wait to defund the CBC." This is unacceptable, and it is heartbreaking for so many Canadians who rely on a strong public broadcaster. This is core to who we are as Canadians, who we are as a country. It is particularly important in regions like ours, and I would argue in every single region across the country.

However, when we see \$18 million worth of bonuses, or, as you call it, performance pay, we know that this contributes to the nega-

tive reputation that the CBC has, particularly at a time when so many Canadians are struggling.

Do you agree that the next head of the CBC should save jobs by ending outrageous executive bonuses?

• (1155)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I believe that the board of directors has taken the appropriate action, and based on the results of that report, will no doubt share the results with my successor, and they will plan accordingly.

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds, Ms. Ashton.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** We know from access to information requests that you're on the record as being concerned about the movement to defund the CBC. We've also heard that you don't live in regret, given the bonuses that you and other executives have received.

What I find deeply concerning is the inability to connect the doling out of these bonuses with the criticism that a lot of Canadians have of the CBC for doing that. That's not the role of a public broadcaster. It's not the role of a Crown corporation. We know that here, in regions like ours, you're not fulfilling your mandate in terms of broadcasting.

What are these bonuses for?

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

We have a second round. I'll go to Mr. Jivani for the Conservatives. You have five minutes, Mr. Jivani.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Tait, I want to clarify a couple of things I heard today.

First, did you say you were on a personal trip to France, decided to extend your vacation, went to the Olympics and then billed the taxpayer for it? Is that correct?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I was on a personal trip to France, and I did not bill the taxpayer for my flight or travel from Canada.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** What did you bill the taxpayer for?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It was for the hotel and the train to get to Paris.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Where does your personal trip end and your taxpayer billing begin?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As part of my job, being at the opening of the Olympics was absolutely expected of me, so I interrupted my holiday and took the four days to go to the Olympics.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Could you understand why that sounds concerning to somebody? It's a bit of a weird situation. You get to go on a trip, you're having your personal time, and then you just unilaterally get to decide what becomes work and what doesn't.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Not if I'm not charging the company for the trip.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** But you charged the taxpayer \$6,000 for your time in Paris.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** That's correct. When I was working in Paris, I did.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Could you understand why it would be concerning for somebody to think that you get to make that decision completely on your own?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It would be concerning if the CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada did not attend the opening of the Olympics, given that it was one of the most important events of our calendar year.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** When the average Canadian hears that you're charging thousands of dollars to the taxpayer and you are deciding when your personal time ends and your billable time begins, it gets to a broader concern and the point about bonuses that many of our colleagues have made today about whether you have respect for the taxpayer.

Can you see why that would be concerning to the average Canadian?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I do not make those decisions alone. I always check in with my chair and I behave in a responsible fashion.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** I'd like to ask if you agree with a statement that's been attributed to you. You said, "the 'defund' narrative has picked up momentum—especially as it relates to CBC television."

Did that come from you?

• (1200)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Okay. That was reported last week by the National Post from an email it obtained that you wrote, I believe, in January 2024. Is that correct?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I presume so, yes.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** When you look at the concerns about your expenses—which I think are legitimate concerns about when your personal vacation time ends and your billable time begins—and the concerns about news stories related to your bonuses that are going out and bonuses you or executives may receive—the \$18 million we've been talking about today—do you think any of that might contribute to what you have observed as a growing movement to defund the CBC?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I absolutely do not.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Why is that?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Having experienced now a third appearance at this committee, I would say there is a clear effort on the part of members of this committee to vilify and discredit me and to discredit the organization.

Not one question has been asked about the accomplishments of the public broadcaster over the last six years and how we have served Canadians.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** I think our Liberal colleagues have asked you some of those questions, so that's not a fair representation of your time here today.

Let's go back to something that our colleague Mr. Coteau asked you earlier.

You referred to key performance indicators. Would the idea that a growing movement in our country that would like to defund your organization be weighed into an analysis of key performance indicators in determining whether the discretionary portions of the bonuses...? You've acknowledged that there is a percentage that is discretionary and not contractually obligated.

You might consider, "Hmm, if people don't like what we're doing, if people don't trust us and if people would like the government to take money away from our bloated organization, maybe we shouldn't be spending more of their money than we have to." Could that not cross your mind in analyzing the KPIs?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** We do not take into consideration political winds or influences in determining our business metrics.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** You would call it a political reaction for the average Canadian to hear that you're doling out \$18 million in bonuses and that you're billing the taxpayer for your time in Paris while on a personal vacation? Is it a political concern for the average Canadian to have an interest in that, based purely on the fact that they are giving you their hard-earned money through taxes?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'm not sure I understand what you're getting at on this question.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds, please.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** You're trying to marginalize legitimate concerns about abuse of taxpayer dollars and you're saying that any accountability that we are trying to introduce here as parliamentarians is purely political. What I'm saying is that the big, beautiful, growing movement to defund the CBC is not a purely political movement but a matter of taxpayer accountability. Can you not acknowledge that?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I will not—

Madam Chair, I will not be accused of abusing taxpayer dollars. I'm sorry; for the record, we have managed our budget extremely carefully. We were facing a \$125-million—

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** I don't think the Canadian people would agree with you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jivani, will you allow Ms. Tait to finish her answer?

Thank you.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** We were facing a \$125 million deficit. We managed as carefully as we could and we respected our obligations to over 1,180 employees. I believe Canadians will understand.

By the way, 73% of Canadians still consider us the most trusted source of news. Seventy-nine per cent of Canadians say they believe that the CBC should be in the future of this country.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Is that as reported on by the CBC, those facts, that data?

**The Chair:** I think we've gone over time, Mr. Jivani. Thank you very much.

I'm now going to go to the Liberals.

Go ahead, Ms. Dhillon, for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I have a point of order.

Can I ask a quick question? Is there an intermission in between, or are we going two hours straight? Is it just two straight hours?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Okay.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

I'd like to start with the accomplishments of the CBC, such as the Paralympic Games, which 11 million Canadians viewed. Then we also have the North American Indigenous Games, the Arctic Winter Games and the promotion of musicians who are struggling—Canadian musicians.

What would happen to all of these people if CBC were defunded? It's very easy to say if CBC were defunded, but how would private media interests affect Canadians, the consumption of information they get and the promotion of Canadian values, heritage and culture? What would happen to all of these things if the CBC were defunded, please?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** On the sports side of the equation, CBC/Radio-Canada has made a commitment to gender parity in amateur sports coverage. That means we've gone from 4% of women covered in sport to 50%. In parasports, we've made an enormous commitment to coverage on a year-round basis.

The IOC considers CBC/Radio-Canada in the top five Olympic broadcasters in the world because of our year-round commitment to amateur sports. To be clear, if not for CBC/Radio-Canada—and we heard this from the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Canadian Paralympic Committee last week at a conference where they stated this without prompting from us—there would be no support for our amateur athletes in this country. It is profound.

Similarly, on the music side, without the Junos, l'Adisq, and all of the things that we do for emerging talent in music, writing and performing, we would be impoverishing this country.

• (1205)

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** How do we protect Canadian values and culture, as opposed to private media organizations, who are going to look at their own private media interests? At least globally, CBC is still promoting Canada and Canadians.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I can't comment on what motivates private companies with respect to the values of the country.

I would say that CBC/Radio-Canada, with its programming like *Lakay Nou*, *Pour toi Flora*, *Bones of Crows*, *Son of a Critch*, *Alliance*.... These are shows that represent Canada's values and tal-

ent. They are widely distributed on the world stage and speak enormously about our values of tolerance and truth.

Again, I do believe that without the CBC, there would be a huge impoverishment of our status and our place on the world stage.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Radio-Canada is so important, because it keeps francophones connected across Canada as well.

Can you talk to us a little bit about the importance of protecting Radio-Canada? We talk about the CBC all the time, but I would mention Radio-Canada.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I said it earlier, and I think Martin Champoux said that without Radio-Canada in the minority language communities—I'm talking about francophones in Edmonton, in North Bay, all over the country—there would be no French news service available to them.

I tried to mention our role in the north. Natan Obed, president of ITK, said unequivocally at the conference last week here in Ottawa that there would be no Inuktitut in this country if not for the CBC. The CBC has been in the north since 1958, broadcasting in Inuktitut. Without the CBC, that language would have disappeared.

These are the kinds of things that the CBC does for this country, and I can only say that it would be a tragedy to lose them.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Can you—

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Okay. Would you like to say anything about the Paris part of your trip and anything to clarify that?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I would just say that it's the role of the CEO to represent CBC/Radio-Canada. We had 185 employees there, many of them in a back office in Roissy, which is near the airport. I spent time with them—they never even go downtown—doing the technical, incredibly advanced work that we do to produce the games—a lot of which is done remotely, by the way—and also to meet with the Canadian Olympic Committee and all of the associated IOC executives.

Let us be clear. We have negotiated the broadcast rights and digital rights to the Olympics through Brisbane 2032, and that gives us a 10-year runway to support amateur sports and athletes in this country, an invaluable treasure, I believe, to this country.

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

I now go to our third round of five minutes, starting with Kevin Waugh from the Conservative Party.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome again, Ms. Tait, along with Mr. Goldbloom.

Today we invited the senior management in compensation at CBC radio and CBC television, and I noticed that your opening statement didn't talk about the compensation. You talked about how accurate your news bureaus are, the trust that people have in you and how you're based on facts, but you never talked about the \$18.4 million in bonuses, so let me start there again, if you don't mind, Ms. Tait.

With regard to 2022-23 bonuses, have you received your compensation package for 2022-23?

• (1210)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Are you talking about me, personally?

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** I'm talking about you personally, yes.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Just to be clear, for the record, the CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada does not participate in the payment plan that those 1,180 people participate in.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Okay. You don't have it yet.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** The process is different. It goes from a recommendation from the board to the minister and from the minister to the PCO. To date, I have not heard back on that particular.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** You mean for that year.

How about this year, 2023-24?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It's the same thing.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Here's what I'm thinking.

Those bonuses are going to be tied into your exit package in January, when you leave. It just seems natural to me. Your fiscal year-end is March. You haven't received your package. I suspect that in the previous five years, you got a bonus performance pay package. You haven't received one for 2022-23, 2023-24 and probably 2025 up to January, when you leave.

My worry is that we're not going to be able to scrutinize this because you're going to leave. Mr. Goldbloom and his board are going to recommend a bonus package for two and a half years and we won't get a shot at having you come back here in 2025 to talk about it. That's why Canadians are upset about the bonus package.

Let me give you a few examples, because I did a survey of my own. I know it's not Toronto and it may not be Vancouver and it may not be Montreal, but my constituent said that \$1.4 billion a year and bonuses of \$18.4 million are insanity. That came from Elaine.

Carol said she refuses to listen to or watch CBC News anymore. You know the metrics in Saskatchewan. Nobody watches or listens to the CBC.

Don said that it's totally unfair to taxpayers and hungry folks in our country.

Trevor said that nobody he knows watches or trusts the CBC anymore.

Rita said that it's a waste of taxpayers' money to fund bonuses for the executives.

Rose said that there should be a complete overhaul of the CEO and management.

Joanne said that the CBC has been a huge waste of taxpayers' money and to defund it as soon as possible.

Dan, a lifelong listener, said that the CBC has lost its way.

We had hundreds of responses from little old Saskatoon and 86% said to make major changes to the corporation or defund it entirely. That's 86% out of Saskatoon.

What do you say about those numbers?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I say I've travelled this country from north to west to east and I also have hundreds, if not thousands, of positive remarks on how important the CBC and Radio-Canada are in those communities that I have visited. In the north, in Yellowknife, in Whitehorse—

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** How about Saskatchewan?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** That's from Saskatoon too, by the way—

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Have you ever visited Saskatoon or Regina?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I have indeed—both.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Good for you—

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I went to the Yorkton festival—

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Okay, so—

**The Chair:** Excuse me for just one minute. Order, please.

A question was asked of the witness. Can she finish answering it, and then you can go with the other question?

Thank you.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I would just point out that there is a large indigenous community in Saskatchewan. We spent a lot of time engaging with those communities in the development of our indigenous strategy. I would say that across the board, I have heard only, quite frankly, a willingness to work with the CBC and with Radio-Canada to change the narrative about indigenous people in this country. That's something that this organization is 100% committed to.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** I have 30 seconds left.

From your strategy, public affairs and government relations person, on average, each visitor spends 37 minutes a month on your platforms.

Ms. Tait, that is like watching *At Issue* two times. Thirty-seven minutes is nothing.

You talk about 21 million people hitting your platforms each month. The number that stood out to me is they're on there for 37 minutes a month. It's deplorable. You're not reaching out to Canadians at 37 minutes a month. Think about that.

• (1215)

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

I now go to Ms. Gainey for the Liberals for five minutes, please.

**Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hello to both of our witnesses. Thank you for being with us today.

I'm wondering if you could go back a bit to this notion of defunding the CBC. I think, on this side of the committee room, we're in firm agreement about the value of the narrative-building and the exposure of our athletes, arts and culture. There's tremendous value in the CBC.

There will be two parts to this question.

One, I'm curious about whether you could re-offer the per capita cost of what we're spending here in Canada compared with other countries. I believe my colleague Mr. Champoux started on that. I think it would be interesting to set the conversation around how much value we're getting, given the cost and what we're investing in the CBC. It strikes me as quite impressive.

By extension, we hear about, for example, the challenge of hiring in rural parts of the country—as my other colleague addressed—for your workplace and the CBC community. This defund narrative, with its tweets and in front of the headquarters in Toronto, is diminishing and reducing, in a sense, the value, while fuelling that discussion around defunding the CBC.

How does that impact your ability to recruit the talent you need, from both a resource perspective and a morale perspective? What is the impact of this line of thinking being advanced around the CBC?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Thank you for the questions.

On the first one, I articulated earlier that the cost to Canadians is \$32 per person per year. For that, CBC/Radio-Canada provides, as I've said before, services on linear television and radio. There are over 45,000 hours of original video content, with 7,000 hours a day distributed across the country, and 95,000 hours of audio. The list goes on. That \$32 has not budged. We used to just deliver television and radio, and we're now doing all of those other things on digital platforms that are streaming audio and video. We've expanded the services without increasing the budget.

With respect to morale, I can tell you that it is not easy, especially for our employees at the CBC, though I would say our colleagues at Radio-Canada are equally nervous. At the CBC, it is highly demoralizing to be the target of constant criticism when you're working each and every day to bring fact-based news and information to Canadians across the country and commissioning some of the best programming in the world. It is hard to attract people when the future of the organization is so uncertain.

The sooner this narrative is shut down the better, because it is certainly more damaging to the reputation of the organization than performance pay is.

**Ms. Anna Gainey:** Thank you for that.

I believe I'm sharing my time with my colleague Patricia. I'm happy to turn the floor over to her.

**The Chair:** That's news to me. I thought Ms. Lattanzio was up in the next round, Ms. Gainey, so unless that's changed, you have two minutes.

**Ms. Anna Gainey:** Oh, I must have misunderstood. I will wrap it up, then. That's fine. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Lattanzio.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.):** Madam Chair, can I use the two minutes that are left?

**The Chair:** Would you like the two minutes?

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Yes, go ahead. That's why I called your name.

Thank you.

• (1220)

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Tait, and welcome again.

Welcome, Mr. Goldbloom. My questions regarding the financial situation will be addressed to you.

We understand it's the same as what other broadcasters are facing. How is it different from or unique to CBC/Radio-Canada?

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** I was fortunate to participate in a conference held here in Ottawa just two weeks ago with the major public service media from around the world. I think there were 30 or 40 different organizations represented. The message from everyone was the same: The importance of the public service media in the democratic world is greater than it's ever been, particularly around the question of disinformation.

There was a lot of discussion about how our public service media can help in the process of informing our citizens. Our democracies are predicated on our citizens being informed, and the challenge of disinformation is greater than it's ever been. That's what I mentioned in my opening remarks regarding the concern that Canadians will not be able to know what's true.

The funding is a similar situation. We're all facing the same challenges in private and public media from the large global tech companies—Meta, Google, Amazon and what have you. It's a significant challenge for all public service media around the world to continue to provide the service to their citizens, and that's certainly the case for us here in Canada.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Okay.



You say that more than 20 million Canadians are using the digital services, or at least that was what Ms. Tait testified to earlier, so why is it that the digital revenue is seemingly not making up for the decline in television revenue?

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** Very quickly, it's the reality for all media that digital advertising is much less profitable than the advertising that supported traditional media.

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

Now we go to Martin Champoux for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Thank you.

Ms. Tait, there's a lot of talk about the survival, future and sustainability of the public broadcaster, today in particular.

A report was submitted to the Quebec government by Ms. Amélie Binette and Ms. Michèle Fortin, the former senior vice-president of French television at Radio-Canada.

Are you aware of this report?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I haven't read it, but I am fairly well aware of its content.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** So you are aware that certain requests, certain recommendations are being made by the province of Quebec, which wishes to participate in the reflection process.

What do you think of the recommendations that have been made?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I think most of the recommendations, as far as CBC/Radio-Canada governance is concerned, are part of the federal government's obligations and responsibilities.

It's not our place to comment on that.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** The report emphasizes the importance of Société Radio-Canada, the SRC, for French-language services throughout Canada, but essentially in Quebec, for the survival of the French language and Quebec culture. As we know, the SRC is very much appreciated in Quebec. The original content created by the SRC's craftspeople for Quebec viewers is made up of programs and other content that are extremely popular in general.

Do you agree with the report's recommendation that the Quebec government ask for certain security measures for the future to be built into the new mandate? For example, it is recommended that the Broadcasting Act be amended to ensure that there is systematically a vice-president of French services and a vice-president of English services. This is not in the law. It's a practice, but it's not necessarily in the law.

Do you also agree, for example, with the bilingualism requirement for both the person occupying the position of president, as you do, and that of chair of the board? It's a practice, but it's not yet in the law. Do you think these measures would be easy to implement and would be effective?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I think the safeguards we already have for the French language in the Broadcasting Act, but also in the Official Languages Act, are adequate for this kind of protection. Still—

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** I apologize for cutting you off, I have very little time.

I'd like to express the fear we have, for example, of seeing another government literally scuttle services and ensure that the French-language services of the SRC are cut and pared down.

• (1225)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I understand that fear, but I think the Official Languages Act, which was recently revised, adds protection for the CBC.

I think it's adequate for now. I leave it to the federal government to review the act, if necessary.

[*English*]

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

Now we go to Niki Ashton for two and a half minutes, please.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you.

Ms. Tait, in your conversations with the Liberal heritage minister or other representatives from this government, was there ever a discussion in which they suggested that you, the CBC, not hand out millions of dollars in executive bonuses while eliminating jobs?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** No. We do not discuss internal administration issues with the government.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** I want to move on to another issue. A 2021 open letter made clear the problem faced by Canadian journalists when covering Palestine:

Anyone who has worked in a Canadian newsroom has encountered the reluctance or resistance to covering Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Canadian style guides still ban the use of the word "Palestine" in coverage; this has led to many corrections over the years. Racialized journalists have reported feeling overly scrutinized, or even censored, after every story pitch on this region.

I will also indicate that I recently worked with groups like Independent Jewish Voices to call on the Canada Revenue Agency to end the practice of Canadian charities illegally funding settlements or facilitating war crimes in Palestine. The CBC and other outlets did not cover this.

Following the release of the letter I quoted from, two CBC journalists were told they could no longer report on Palestine. This has been repeated time and time again.

In fact, last week journalist Arfa Rana wrote about her experience of being the only Muslim in her newsroom trying to provide context to the CBC's coverage of Palestine and Israel. After raising the concerns she had, she was punished by her editors by being dismissed from daily pitch meetings for a few weeks. A senior producer told her that Palestine was an outdated term, like Persia.

The journalist makes no mention of that senior producer receiving any sort of punishment. Who knows? Maybe he even received a bonus. She wrote, “when crimes against humanity are being committed, there is no such thing as both sides to a story. There is only the truth.” Her treatment by CBC executives led to her resigning her position. The CBC is worse off as a result.

I want to indicate that when we're talking about a crisis of reputation, we're also talking about the CBC's coverage of what's happening in Palestine right now, something that we've heard a number of people be critical of. I know that the editorial line needs to be separate from your side of things, but what can the next president of the CBC do to ensure that journalists aren't being silenced or stifled, or that both-siding a genocide isn't happening from our public broadcaster?

**The Chair:** Thank you. We have run out of time, but I will allow Ms. Tait 30 seconds to answer, please.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Well, I'm afraid it's not a 30-second answer.

This is one of the most difficult and emotional subjects we have faced in our newsrooms, at both Radio-Canada and the CBC, since October 7 and those tragic events of the Middle East.

All I can say is that we work very, very hard to support all our journalists, irrespective of their backgrounds. Most importantly, we have journalistic standards and practices that are transparent and that we respect. We have two ombudsmen to ensure that they are respected in all our news coverage.

All I can say on that point is that I have great confidence that my successor will do as I have done and leave the business of news reporting in the hands of the experts and professionals who are of the highest standard in this country and who are, quite frankly, some of the best from around the world.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I will go to the final part of this round.

For the Conservatives, Mr. Kurek, you have five minutes, please.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

You talked a lot about trust and relying on the facts. It is a fact that there were significant job cuts at CBC. In fact, there were cuts made just before Christmas. It is a fact that performance pay bonuses were awarded very generously to the tune of more than \$18 million. To reconcile that with your testimony here today is quite something.

We did do some digging into these KPIs, or key performance indicators, and some of the targets. In your previous testimony before this committee, you talked a lot about a process, but what I find very interesting is that the reports that come out of the CBC fawn over how great you're doing, to the point that maybe the only place you'd be more popular than that would be at a Liberal cabinet meeting. Even today you suggested, after one of Mr. Coteau's questions, that you needed to be realistic in that.

To go back to the KPIs from this past fiscal year, you said that by your own metrics, you met 13 of the 14 performance targets. That was a massive increase from meeting only three of the 14 targets the previous year. Something doesn't smell right with that. When it

comes to the actual meeting of tangible targets, we started going through some of that information, and we saw that you lowered the KPIs for this past year, some of them quite significantly.

Ms. Tait, compared to the previous year—three of 14 versus 13 of 14—does that affect bonuses?

• (1230)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'm sorry. What are the years you are referring to? They are 2022-23 and 2023-24, not 2014. Is that correct?

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Yes. I'm sorry.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** What was the question?

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** In 2022-23, you met three of 14 KPIs. This last year, you met 13 of 14. Did that affect the bonuses paid out?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Of course it did.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** By your own information, you lowered those KPIs in order to see that they were met. In other words, what you have stated is that by lowering the KPIs, your organization and those within management are receiving more information.

Mr. Goldbloom, I'd like—

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Could I respond to that?

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** —to ask...

I'm just stating the facts, Ms. Tait.

Mr. Goldbloom, I'm wondering if you could share with this committee—

**The Chair:** Excuse me. Excuse me, please.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I have a point of order.

I really do think that if you're making such a grand statement, the witness should be able to respond to it. That's just fair.

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

I was about to say that one cannot make a statement without allowing the witness a chance to respond.

Ms. Tait, please go ahead.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** We have a very rigorous process in place for establishing KPIs on an annual basis. We look at previous performance, but most importantly, we look at what's happening in the industry.

When you see a trend of a 5% decline in television subscription, you don't ignore it. You adjust your KPIs accordingly, and we build in some stretch. What that means is that every single KPI is looked at, and by the way, they are not all lowered. In the case of kids and in the case of diversity and representation, there are numbers that are higher than the previous year. Just to be clear, I'll say that we're not making up KPIs; they are based on what is going on in the industry.

I think you've heard from others on a number of occasions that this industry is in decline. It is an extremely challenging time. How do you manage that, and how do you keep your people motivated to go forward? You build in stretch.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** That “stretch” is a new word, and there certainly seems to be some stretching taking place here.

Mr. Goldbloom, can you commit to release to this committee the information related to recommendations that you have made for Ms. Tait's bonus and recommendations that you would make to the government when it comes to severance?

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** As I said before, to my understanding, our communications with the government around the performance recommendations for the CEO are governed by privacy—

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thank you.

I do have one last question—

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** —but I do want to say that we will make public the report done by the independent organization that's going to look at our compensation, and we'd be pleased to share those recommendations with you.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Thank you. Please do.

Ms. Tait, the CBC stopped broadcasting the Calgary Stampede a number of years ago. Why?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I wasn't at the organization at that time, so I can't comment on the specifics of that decision.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Are western heritage and frontier culture important to the CBC?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Absolutely they are. It's why we're rolling out more journalist positions in the west, disproportionately to anywhere else in the country.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** I want to nail down specifically—

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I think, Mr. Kurek, your five minutes are up.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Could you provide information related to the specifics around the Calgary Stampede to this committee, please?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'm happy to.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now go to Ms. Lattanzio for five minutes, please.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** One of the first things that the Harper government did when it got into office was boost the performance pay for executives, including those at the CBC. Reports at the time

said that “The main reason cited for the latest raises at the top in Ottawa is to prevent senior government executives from jumping to even more lucrative positions in the private sector”, that “Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his cabinet quietly approved the pay hikes behind the scenes - in the summer doldrums - obviously hoping to keep political flak to a minimum”, and that “In the case of CEOs of crown corporations such as the CBC and Canada Post, the value of the raises (and bonuses) rivals the total amount that a minimum wage earner would earn in an entire year.”

Let me quote another investigative report from August 2015: “Spending on bonuses and performance pay for the public service executives who implement the government's orders has jumped by more than 65 per cent since Stephen Harper came to power.” It also says, “The average executive performance pay envelope has also risen under the Conservative government.”

The government Poilievre was part of famously gave historic levels of performance pay to CEO-level public servants, including the CBC CEO right before leaving. Is that correct?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I am afraid I can't comment on decisions that were made during a different period. If there are details that we can provide afterwards to the committee, I'll take advice from my staff on that—

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm sorry. Give me just a minute, Ms. Lattanzio.

If you have any details you can share with us, Ms. Tait, please do so. You can forward them to the clerk and we'll distribute them to everyone else. Thank you.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's exactly what I was going to suggest.

I want to pursue the financing with Mr. Goldbloom, as we were doing earlier.

You say that more than 20 million Canadians are using those digital services, which are now making up for the rest. Also, the government has given CBC/Radio-Canada an additional \$21 million over the past three years. How has that helped address your financial situation?

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** Like every organization in the country, private or public, the public broadcaster has been challenged with inflation, which has significantly increased expenses. We also talked before about a decline in revenue, so the support in government funding has been critical to allow the public broadcaster to continue to fulfill its mandate to Canadians to inform them, enlighten them and provide entertainment to them.

This is a challenge that Canadians have faced for almost 90 years now. As technology has changed, each generation has had to determine how to best ensure that Canadians still get to hear their own stories, report on their own news and celebrate their own culture, so the government support has been critical.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Can you also provide us with details on the additional \$42 million the government invested in the last budget? What are you doing with that additional revenue?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** If I may answer that, Madam Chair, the additional \$42 million allowed us to put a pause on further job cuts.

As you'll remember, we were looking at an additional 420 jobs, and as I said, we were able to put a pause on that and re-engage with some of the independent production commissioning we had also put a pause on.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Are you out of the woods? Should there be more cuts coming if the budget shortfalls continue in this challenging commercial revenue situation? What happens then?

• (1240)

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** The \$42 million we received allowed us to balance our budget for this year. Without further funding in the next fiscal year, we will have to look at additional job reductions, as well as other operational cuts, in order to balance our budget.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Thank you.

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

I have been asked by the members to go for another round. We have very little time and I have business for this committee, which should take five minutes, but I think we'll go with a two-minute round for everyone.

We will begin with Mr. Gourde for two minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I had one more question for Ms. Tait, Mr. Goldbloom or both.

I come back to the question of bonuses.

Was it management's choice, as presented to the board of directors, to grant bonuses? Was CBC/Radio-Canada obliged to give bonuses, or could it have chosen not to? Did you make a recommendation to the board of directors, which endorsed the decision to award bonuses? Could you have chosen not to give bonuses at all?

Was it a choice or an obligation to give these bonuses?

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** I would say it was the obligation of our organization, in order to fulfill the commitment we made to our non-union employees.

As Ms. Tait said, we set goals and, if employees meet them, they expect to be compensated accordingly.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** So it's a moral obligation. In the regulations, there is nothing anywhere that obliges the board of directors to give bonuses.

**Mr. Michael Goldbloom:** That is debatable.

Some lawyers will say that, indeed, we have this legal obligation, because the conditions have been met. For our part, it was essentially a matter of fulfilling our commitment.

We make commitments to our unionized employees through collective agreements and to our non-unionized employees on the basis of the objectives we set. When they reach their targets, they are compensated accordingly.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you.

I will yield my remaining time to Mr. Waugh.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds, Mr. Waugh.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm worried about the CBC.

Mr. Goldbloom, I think your CEO was blindsided by the decline of trust in the CBC. In fact, she wrote a defensive editorial last year in the Toronto Star. I think she's been blindsided by the gathering of momentum that I read to defund the CBC, and now you're going to go to the government on behalf of the board of CBC and give Ms. Tait two and a half years of bonus. How can you do this?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry that I cannot have an answer. I told everyone we have two minutes, and we've now gone over two minutes on this round.

I will go to the Liberals, to Mr. Noormohamed, for two minutes, please.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Given that we've had, I think, an exhaustive discussion today with Madam Tait and Mr. Goldbloom, there are a couple of key things that are worth putting on the record.

The first is that Ms. Tait noted that under the Conservatives, the per capita bonuses paid to CBC executives on an inflationary basis actually were higher under the Harper government than they are now, despite the misinformation that is now already being spread by some Conservative-leaning channels. I think it's important for us to remember that.

The other thing that's important to note is that the Harper government also used similar tactics to retain employees. By the way, I think that's an important thing. I think it's important for us to pay people what they are worth so that they can do good work on behalf of Canadians. I think Canadians would respect that good work is paid fairly.

With that, Madam Chair, I'd like to now move a motion reflecting the conversation that we've had today. The motion is as follows:

Given that more than 11 million Canadians tuned in to CBC/Radio-Canada's coverage of the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games;

Given that the national public broadcaster offered the most coverage in Canada of a Paralympic Games to date;

Given that CBC offers a coverage of sports events that are important to Canadians and our Canadian identity, such as the Arctic Winter Games, the North American Indigenous Games and the Commonwealth Games;

And given that under previous Conservative governments, no 2012 Summer Paralympics sport events were shown live on television in Canada despite record international media coverage in other countries;

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of no less than four meetings of CBC/Radio-Canada's coverage of amateur sport, with particular attention to how the public broadcaster provides a Canadian perspective on Canadian stories, highlights sporting events that would otherwise receive less coverage, unites our country and helps advance the goals of the Olympic and Paralympic movements.

I will circulate that, Madam Chair, in both English and French, if that has not already been done.

I think this is an important motion, given the questions we heard that reflect the importance of making sure that Canadians can see sporting events and others that may not be "popular" on some of the other channels but that clearly, in the eyes of Canadians, are not only incredibly popular but incredibly powerful and that convey an incredible sense of paralympic athletes' accomplishments across this country from coast to coast to coast.

This is something that I think we should be extremely proud of, and I think we need to really examine the consequences and the implications of this very important coverage.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1245)

**The Chair:** Mr. Noormohamed, we will not entertain debate on this motion because we didn't get 48 hours' notice. This is not pertaining to compensation; it's pertaining to the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, which is a totally different issue. However, we will have this motion on notice to be debated if the committee so wishes at the next meeting, or if you want to bring it back at the next meeting.

I want to go to Mr. Champoux for two minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thought we were going to debate the motion, because I thought it fit, perhaps a little broadly, a little loosely, into today's topic since it touches on CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate. I would have been delighted to discuss this very interesting motion. Perhaps another time, if your decision stands.

Ms. Tait, Mr. Goldbloom, thank you again for coming today.

Having to conclude in two minutes is not a lot, but what I want to point out today, above and beyond everything that can be criticized about the way CBC/Radio-Canada has handled the budget reduction announcements, particularly over the past year and a half, among other things, and the awarding of performance bonuses—which was highly questionable in the context—is that we need to

remember the bigger picture, not just of CBC/Radio-Canada, but of the state of the news media in Canada and around the world. Rather than disunite and adhere to populist positions, we should instead face this major problem in an adult way, responsibly and, above all, urgently.

I am extremely worried when I hear truths and words manipulated to respond to popular grumbling, not always justified, against the public broadcaster. What I noticed today, in connection with the questions from the Conservative colleagues, is that all the questions they put to you were answered in a way that flatly defeated their arguments and rhetoric.

I hope this will have a big impact and resonate.

Yes, the question of remuneration needs to be challenged. Yes, we need to find new ways to make the Quebec and Canadian public understand, first, the importance of a healthy public broadcaster, but also the importance of adequately remunerating artisans, journalists and executives, in order to attract quality people if we want to have a quality broadcaster.

Thank you again for coming. Ms. Tait, this may be the last opportunity we have to meet during this mandate. It hasn't always been easy, but you've always weathered the storm. You've always answered questions as thoroughly as possible. When you didn't have the answers, you always sent us full answers, as you had promised. Everyone can testify to your thoroughness, even if we may have differences of opinion on your overall performance as president and CEO of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

That said, I truly hope that we will succeed in ensuring that CBC/Radio-Canada remains a healthy, rigorous public broadcaster, that it will have an important role to play and that it will play it to counter this rise in disinformation and populism in our media, which call themselves news media these days.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Champoux.

Now I'm going to Ms. Ashton for two minutes. I'm sorry, Ms. Tait.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Am I allowed to respond to that?

**The Chair:** We are short on time, but go ahead with a quick response of 30 seconds.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I just want to thank the member from the Bloc. It has not been easy, especially in the face of extreme misinformation.

I learned just minutes ago that right now on Twitter, there are some members claiming that I charged taxpayers for a personal trip to Paris. I want to say this while you're all in this room: I made it very clear why I, as CEO, was in Paris at the Olympic Games—one of the most important events—where Canada performed spectacularly.

I want to say how much I appreciate the comments of the *député* about my willingness to be honest and frank in presenting the facts at this committee.

• (1250)

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

I might note that you also said you paid for the trip to Paris on your own dime, so thank you very much.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**The Chair:** She paid for her trip. I'm sorry. We are not debating this issue, Mr. Jivani.

Go ahead, Ms. Ashton.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Well, speaking of the Olympics this summer, we were so proud of our Canadian athletes and their successes.

However, Canadians are also very concerned by the spying scandal that engulfed our women's soccer team, who gave it their all in spite of the officials who embroiled them in scandal and damaged Canada's reputation when it comes to soccer and, frankly, the ethics of sport on the world stage. Canada Soccer committed to giving us answers weeks or even months ago. We haven't heard anything. Canadians have a lot of questions. Officials of the Canadian soccer team continue to delay. We've heard little from the government and officials as to what's going on—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Ms. Ashton; this is not in order. This is not what we're discussing right now. We're discussing compensation for the CBC.

If you have a statement to share—

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Chair, this is my speaking time. I have the right to say what I'd like to say during my speaking time.

**The Chair:** It is not the order of the day, but go ahead.

You had two minutes. You have one minute left.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** That is why I would like to put forward the following motion that we submitted last week. It is an updated version of a previous motion we put forward:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of no less than six hours to study the role of officials associated to the Canadian women's soccer team and Canada Soccer in the use of drones for spying during the Paris Olympics or in previous competitions, which has damaged Canada's reputation and punished the players for something they had no part in, and that the committee summon, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), Bev Priestman, Jasmine Mander, Joseph Lombardi and John Herdman to appear before the committee for no less than two hours and before December 11, 2024, in addition to the chief executive officer and representatives of Soccer Canada and representatives of FIFA, and past or present Team Canada soccer players; and that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

I present this in my right as a member of Parliament in this committee. This is an almost identical version of a previous motion that we submitted. The exception is the change to the date.

Canadians have questions that haven't been answered by the Minister of Heritage and the Minister of Sport. I think most importantly, it's important for parliamentarians, on behalf of Canadians, to seek some accountability and ensure that we are truly supporting our athletes, especially as we gear up for co-hosting the World Cup in 2026.

I don't think this should take much more attention than it has. I hope we can move to a vote and move forward on something that Canadians really care about.

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

I would like to take the opportunity before we vote on your motion to thank Mr. Goldbloom and Ms. Tait for coming here today and answering tough questions.

I think I could repeat what Mr. Champoux said, and he's absolutely right. You've always been frank and above board and you have answered difficult questions and sent us information if you didn't have it on hand. Thank you for coming. I appreciate your time.

I'm going to now say that the witnesses may leave. Thank you very much.

The committee will move to Ms. Ashton's motion. I have been trying to get a couple of budgets for these meetings voted on, and it seems that we're not going to be able to do that.

I'd like to put Ms. Ashton's motion on the table. Does anyone wish to discuss it?

I see no hands up for discussion.

I'm going to call a vote. Do you want a recorded vote, Ms. Ashton?

You do.

Would the clerk please move to a recorded vote? Thank you.

(Motion negated: nays 6; yeas 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** I'm going to now quickly ask the committee to bear with me just for a minute to discuss the two budgets that I have for you.

One is a budget for the study of Canada's anti-racism strategy. The amount is \$2,500. Is someone moving to accept this budget?

• (1255)

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** How much is it for?

**The Chair:** It's for \$2,500, Mr. Coteau.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I'll move it.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there anyone against the approval of this budget? I see no one.

(Motion agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** The second one is a budget for the study of senior management compensation at CBC/Radio-Canada, which we just did. We need to pay for this. It's \$2,250.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I'll move that motion.

**The Chair:** That is again moved by Mr. Coteau.

Is anyone opposed to this budget?

(Motion agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** The two budgets have been passed.

This meeting is adjourned.

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