

SENATE



SÉNAT

STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

COMITÉ SÉNATORIAL PERMANENT
DES TRANSPORTS ET DES
COMMUNICATIONS

OTTAWA

September 15, 2014

Hubert Lacroix
President and CEO
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
1400 René-Lévesque Blvd. E.
Montreal, Quebec
H2L 2M2

Dear Mr. Lacroix,

Let me begin by thanking you for your past correspondence regarding the Senate Standing Committee on Transport and Communications' study of the challenges faced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Radio-Canada in relation to the changing environment of broadcasting and communications.

Before the summer recess, the Committee was engaged with the examination of several pieces of government legislation. With these tasks completed, the Committee is now returning to its study of the CBC/SRC. Since your last appearance, the ground has shifted substantially with the announced budget cuts, staffing reductions, the CRTC hearings into the future of television broadcasting, your announcement of modernization plans for the corporation and the arrival of Unis, just to name a few of the many developments currently underway. When Parliament resumes for the fall session, we will recommence our study of the CBC/SRC and plan to address these new considerations.

With these new efforts, we would like to re-invite you and Mr. Rémi Racine to appear before the Committee this fall. This opportunity would permit you to address some of the topics I mentioned above and some of the outstanding issues from your last appearance. Due to the diversity of subject matter that the Committee would like to address, we wish to hear from you and Mr. Racine at separate times. The Committee will be holding hearings outside the National Capital Region in October and November. This may be an opportune time to hear from you and Mr. Racine when we are in Montreal. I have instructed the Clerk of the Committee to make the necessary arrangements with your officials to find a convenient time.

During our hearings today and throughout our fact-finding activities, many individuals commented positively about the CBC/SRC's news coverage both at the national and international level. Several have commented that bringing a Canadian perspective to Canadians is a core value to be continued. With news being disseminated over multiple platforms, how Canadians receive their information is evolving. For our review to be complete and

comprehensive, we feel that hearing about the journalism component is important. We feel that it is necessary to hear about how journalism is adapting to the changing environment of broadcasting and communications.

With this in mind, we wish to invite Mr. Peter Mansbridge and Ms. Céline Galipeau to appear jointly to address how journalism is changing in the new environment of broadcasting. These individuals have a long history in the field of journalism and with the CBC/SRC, and so we feel that their insight would greatly benefit our deliberations. As a Committee, we understand the issues of having journalists appear before individuals about whom they report. We believe that we can put in place the necessary parameters to respect their journalistic independence while permitting the Committee to gather the information it needs. As I mentioned previously, the Committee will be traveling to various Canadian locales and we can easily accommodate their schedule by hearing each individual in Toronto and Montreal respectively. We look forward to a positive response.

In your April 9, 2014 letter, you referenced a document containing the “names of every employee of the Corporation, their position, and their salary classification” for the Committee’s review as a follow-up to the questions asked on employee compensation during your appearance on February 26, 2014. This list was distributed to members. There is consensus among the members of the Committee that the information is incomplete for our inquiry. Questions from senators address issues of transparency related to the money provided to the CBC/SRC from taxpayers. The Committee feels that it did not receive the information it requires, either during your presentation, or in your subsequent letters. We therefore request that the CBC/SRC provide a list of all persons, with their positions, remuneration and other benefits received under a contract of employment or contract for services, whose total compensation (remuneration and other benefits received) exceeded \$200,000 for 2013; we would like to receive this information no later than December 1, 2014. This information should be forwarded to the clerk.

It is our strong belief that this information is essential to our work in order to gain a complete picture of employee compensation within the corporation. As you stated in your May 26, 2014 letter, “[i]n broadcasting, as in most businesses, a few employees can negotiate salaries beyond the range of their classification.” The Committee needs to fully understand these processes and outcomes for its report to the Senate and to Canadians. I would like to note that a Committee of the Senate, just like a Committee of the House of Commons, is entitled to receive information it requests for the purpose of a study, even if it is of a confidential nature. If you require, the clerk can provide you with the constitutional and parliamentary authorities to support our request.

In your testimony and your letters, you raised the issue of privacy. The Committee is prepared to make some accommodation to respect the privacy of CBC/SRC employees. Some measures that could be explored include: an *in camera* review by members, limited and numbered copies, and special dispositions for the destruction of the document after the Committee has completed its work. The information would be considered a protected document, and any unauthorized disclosure would be considered a breach of privilege and contempt of the Senate. Officials from your office can further discuss any special arrangements with the clerk.

It is the Committee's intention that, through this study, it will provide parliamentary input into the future of public broadcasting. As is stated in the introduction of the questionnaire that the CBC/SRC has recently launched, "the broadcasting industry is dramatically changing and we must make tough choices to ensure that we are able to seize opportunities and position ourselves to meet the evolving needs of Canadians." We fully agree and this is why the Committee has undertaken this study.

On behalf of the members of the Committee, I look forward to hearing from you regarding our requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis Dawson', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Dennis Dawson, Senator
Chair

c.c.: The Honourable Leo Housakos, Senator
The Honourable Donald Plett, Senator
Peter Mansbridge, Chief Correspondent of CBC News
Céline Galipeau, Chef d'antenne du Téléjournal