



Opening remarks

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Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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Introduction

Good morning Dr. Fry and members of the Committee. Thank you very much for the invitation to take part in the Committee's examination of Telefilm Canada.

I feel privileged to have a front-row seat as our audiovisual industry continues to innovate and amaze Canadians and those around the globe.

To start, and on behalf of Telefilm Canada, I would like to thank the government and Minister Joly for the commitment and the confidence shown in Canada's cultural sector, as expressed in the recent federal budget.

Please be assured that these new parliamentary appropriations will help to foster creative innovation and further showcase Canadian talent both in Canada and abroad.

Today I'd like to focus my comments on the following three areas: 1) a brief overview on Telefilm Canada's role and support to the Canadian audiovisual industry; 2) our successes and our challenges; and 3) our priorities for the next three years.

Overview: What We Do

Telefilm Canada has the mandate to foster and promote the development of the Canadian audiovisual industry. We play a leadership role through financial support and initiatives that contribute to the industry's cultural, industrial and commercial success.

In 2014-2015, we supported the production and marketing of 87 feature films and the development of more than 300 projects while also helping to promote our Canadian talent in Canada and international festivals.

Telefilm also administers funding programs for the Canada Media Fund, approximately 366 million dollars in 2014-2015. And we make recommendations regarding the certification of audiovisual treaty coproductions to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Our Successes

Building on our near 50 years of investment, Telefilm, together with its partners, has helped shape a landscape conducive to creativity. We have now reached a maturity that enables us to produce and export works of excellent quality. Canadian and foreign film and television production volume in 2014-2015 reached 7 billion dollars and accounted for over 148,000 full-time jobs.

Film production amounted, for its part, to 349 million dollars and accounted for 7,300 full-time jobs.

What a year this has been for Canada, starting with 21 Canadians behind various Oscar nominations.

And two Canadian coproductions, in fact, Canada-Ireland coproductions—*Room* and *Brooklyn*—received Best Picture nominations. A first! Hosted by Minister Joly, the next Movie Night on the Hill event, on May 3rd, features the movie *Room*, and you are all invited!

And it continues with Cannes. Xavier Dolan's *Juste la fin du monde* is in the running for the top prize, the Palme d'or. It's his fifth film to be selected for Cannes! And in the Directors' Fortnight, there's Kim Nguyen's *Two Lovers and a Bear* and Nathan Morlando's *Mean Dreams*. Finally, François Jaro's short *Oh What A Wonderful Feeling* is part of the Critics' Week.

The profile of our talent has never been higher than it is today.

More and more, we're being seen as a country that produces talent. And, a number of Canadian directors are increasingly in demand outside Canada.

The *New York Times* noted our industry's success in an article, saying that "Canada is on a hot streak, its movies regularly winning prizes."

Our Challenges & The Future

Despite these successes, we all face challenges.

But our challenges are also our opportunities. Our new 2015-2018 strategic plan, *Inspired by Talent. Viewed Everywhere*, addresses how we will face this and other challenges ahead, and turn them to our advantage.

First, we need to promote the excellence of Canadian content by conducting effective promotion of the industry and its successes directly to consumers.

To this end, Telefilm is pleased to announce an “audience first” campaign—developed in collaboration with the industry, which will drive awareness for Canada’s talent. The initiative will gather momentum as Canada celebrates its 150th in 2017.

Second, we need to foster more ground-breaking marketing practices by connecting with a larger number of viewers. We encourage the industry to find new ways of getting viewers to be more engaged with our stories.

Third, we need to make decisions supported by meaningful metrics. It’s vital that we make informed decisions based on value-added research.

Fourth, we need to help the industry diversify its sources of funding by attracting new funding partners, which is the main objective of our Talent Fund, developed to empower corporations and individuals to support Canadian films through charitable donations and partnerships.

As the Committee is aware, Canada virtually invented official treaty coproduction.

With agreements with over 50 countries, coproduction continues to be a crucial leveraging tool for our industry. And we’re happy to report that Canada has been invited to join Eurimages, the 25-million Euro cultural support fund of the Council of Europe. Canada would be the first non-European member! This opportunity will provide the industry with another excellent instrument to access international funding and to better export our cinema.

Finally, we continually strive to achieve organizational excellence. Telefilm will maintain its low administrative expenses, not exceeding 6%.

We are very proud that Telefilm received the Award of Excellence in Financial Reporting for Crown Corporations in 2014 from the Chartered Professional Accountants.

And recently, Telefilm won three awards in the 2014-2015 Vision Awards Annual Report Competition, including the Platinum Award, the competition’s highest distinction in the *Financials* class.

Telefilm's vision for the future is clear: we want Canadian creative content to be accessible and to be viewed everywhere.

For nearly 26 years at Telefilm Canada, I have believed in Telefilm's mission more and more each day. I admit it—I am sentimental and I totally assume it. I am moved by the talent behind the productions we support and truly amazed at the creativity, imagination and performance of our nation's directors, writers, actors and film crews.

Each time the magic is created on screen, I experience the same emotion I had as a child when watching the *Count of Monte Cristo* with my grandmother.

I am also proud of the work we have accomplished. In 2017, Telefilm will celebrate its 50th anniversary at the same time as Canada turns 150. The industry we have been asked to develop and promote not only makes a contribution to Canada's economic well-being, but also shines the spotlight on our country throughout the world.

Thank you to Michael Spencer, Gratien Gélinas and to all the employees who have worked at Telefilm over the past 50 years.

Our challenge is to make sure companies have the resources that will allow them to remain competitive in an environment where content is king and the resources of our competition are virtually unlimited.

As a final word, I have a dream to share because I'm not just sentimental, but a perpetual dreamer as well. I dream of the day when all Canadians will be just as proud of the success of David Gross and Emma Donoghue (producer and writer of *Room*) as they are of the accomplishments of P.K. Subban and the Dufour-Lapointe sisters.

I thank you once again, Dr. Fry, for inviting us to appear here today.

We now welcome your questions.