



## Opening Remarks

**Chairman of Telefilm Canada,  
Mr. Michel Roy**

### **STANDING COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**Study on the Evolution of Canadian Television**

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Good afternoon Mr. Schellenberger and Honorable Members of the Committee. My name is Michel Roy and I am the Chair of Telefilm Canada. Joining me here today is Wayne Clarkson, Executive Director of Telefilm Canada.

First, let me thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you to share our views with respect to your study on the evolution of the future of television. This is an important process that you have embarked on.

### **A Healthy Canadian Content Production Environment**

The viability of local television largely contributes to the stability and health of the entire broadcasting system to the benefit of all industry stakeholders and communities across the country. As an investor on behalf of the Canadian government in independently produced Canadian content creation, Telefilm Canada has a vested interest in the maintenance of a healthy broadcast system.

Telefilm Canada's role, as you know, is to foster the creation of Canadian content regardless of platform.

Administering cultural development programs worth approximately \$400 million annually – the Canada Feature Film Fund, the Canada New Media Fund and the Canadian Television Fund (on behalf of the Board of the CTF) – Telefilm is the privileged financial instrument of the government to encourage and provide support to private sector producers, distributors, writers, directors, and other creative talent of the Canadian audiovisual industry.

The scope of our responsibilities demands exemplary governance, and I have made it my personal mission, during the first year of my tenure as Chairman of the Board of Telefilm Canada, to strengthen and stabilize the corporation's governance. We now have a solid and seasoned Board of Directors that ensures the public and private funds we administer are managed with optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

Just a few weeks ago, Mr. Clarkson and I, along with the members of the Board, met with the industry in Montreal and the country via live webcast, and renewed our commitment to working with all our partners to continue to bring high quality Canadian content to audiences on the platforms of their choosing.

### **Partnerships for a Thriving Canadian Content Industry**

In our view, the elements that have contributed thus far to a thriving audiovisual industry, award-winning works, stem from fruitful partnerships – among talented Canadians; independent producers, broadcasters and government funding agencies.

These partnerships help Canadian content producers secure the necessary financing to produce the works that audiences appreciate. As you know, the financing of Canadian content continues to be one of the greatest challenges faced by the industry. Now, broadcasters are essential among the many players contributing to the financing of Canadian content.

Television affords more opportunities for talented creators to work and assures a highly skilled creative workforce for related sectors such as feature films.

Producers, writers and directors successfully navigate the porous border between film and television all the time. Over the course of their careers, popular stars like Paul Gross, Patrick Huard and Sara Polley have appeared on both big and small screens, accumulating star value with different audiences. Numerous screenwriters and directors cut their teeth in television. *NITRO*'s writer Benoit Guichard got his start in music videos. Before making *BORDERLINE*, Line Charlebois directed numerous TV shows, including the hit series *NOS ÉTÉS*.

Canadian television – including conventional television, CBC-Radio Canada, pay television, and video on demand – has been a key platform to support our domestic film industry, largely as a result of regulated Canadian content requirements.

### **“Everything is Coming out of its Containers”**

There is no doubt that there are challenges facing conventional television. The evolution of audiovisual technologies has profoundly changed how Canadians communicate, express themselves and interact with various media. One observer described the changes taking place as “everything is coming out of its containers”.

The business case for conventional television has changed significantly through the expansion of viewing choices, and this fragmentation of viewing is causing ongoing erosion in advertising revenue and profitability of broadcasters. The central challenge now is that new business models are required to move those containers around.

Ironically, while this is a time of great upheaval in Canadian television, it is also a time of great opportunity for Canadian content producers as evidenced by the popularity of Canadian drama such as *FLASHPOINT*, co-produced by Anne-Marie Latraverse and Bill Mustos with the US. More recently, long time film producer Roger Frappier of Maxfilms together with Karine Martin of MediaBiz concluded a twelve show deal with German producer Eva for the production of action-thriller telepics.

To ensure that we have the capacity going forward to produce high quality Canadian programming that Canadians want to watch, Canadian producers need access to international financing.

One of the highest priorities for the Board of Telefilm Canada is precisely to help Canadian producers attract greater international financing and assure the continued growth of the Canadian audiovisual sector.

### **Investing in Canadian Content on Many Platforms**

The Canadian broadcasting system and its use of various audiovisual technologies must remain relevant in a global digital environment. Previous innovations in new technologies provoked fundamental changes in the way content was consumed. The shift today, occurring as a result of the exploitation of digital platforms will be even more profound.

In this regard, in creating the Canada Media Fund, Minister Moore made the wise decision that it should support the production of Canadian content for all platforms, including interactive digital media. There is no doubt that traditional media and new media form a continuum – supporting both means adapting to the new environment.

### **The Way Forward**

Telefilm is hopeful that this dialogue, which the Committee has initiated through this review, will not lose from sight the importance of maintaining strong Canadian content in the audiovisual industry. A healthy environment will ensure that talented young Canadians can continue to find work and production opportunities in their respective communities.

Time and time again, we are reminded that compelling stories that originate from diverse communities make the most memorable entertainment.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, we understand that television broadcasting creates revenues for a certain number of players, each of which plays a role within the system, and each of which wants to receive its fair share of these revenues. Regardless of that situation, and because of the huge cultural impact that television has on the Canadian population, Telefilm believes that everything must be undertaken to maintain a substantial share of Canadian content within the Canadian broadcasting system.

Thank you for your attention. We would now be happy to answer your questions.