

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE **ARTS** NETWORK

August 26, 2009

Robert A Morin
Secretary General
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications
Commission
1 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec
J8X 4B1

Dear Secretary General,

Re: CRTC 2009-437

1. ELAN is the English-language Arts Network-Quebec and we represent English-speaking artists in Quebec. We began in 2004 and now have over 1,700 members, including about 200 members in the film and television disciplines.
2. ELAN would like to appear before the Commission, if there is a public hearing on the CBC's application 2009-0701-6 to amend its license for bold (the channel), to discuss in more detail the issues we briefly raise in this intervention.
3. The CRTC pointed out in its 2008-12 decision titled "Report to the Governor in Council on English- and French-language broadcasting services in English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada, March 30, 2009" that the CBC plays an especially important role in the reflection of official language minority communities (OLMCs), and that the CBC should have the resources needed to do that. We couldn't agree more on both counts.
4. The CRTC also indicated in this report that "community reflection in the programming services available in the Canadian broadcasting system can be improved". We believe that is especially the case for television services available to the English-speaking communities in Quebec outside Montreal.
5. We believe this application raises important issues about regional reflection for the official language minority in Quebec, and how that reflection will be achieved. We remind the Commission that there is no English-language educational broadcaster in Quebec, nor Quebec English-language specialty or even community channels. Therefore, the regional reflection of the 800,000 official language minority in Montreal is inadequate, and non-existent for the 200,000 Anglophones in the rest of Quebec.

6. When it was originally licensed, *Country Canada* promised to bring programming with a rural perspective to this underserved audience across Canada. However, with a subscription base of one million that generates only \$3.6 million in revenue, practically no advertising revenue, and the public broadcaster's parliamentary appropriation inadequate and declining, we understand that there isn't the money to originate programming on the scale originally promised.

7. We need a service that provides regional reflection for the official language minority communities in Quebec, especially those outside of Montreal. With this application, the CBC is admitting that it cannot provide that regional reflection on this channel, nor in our opinion, can it provide that reflection on its other services.

8. Therefore, in our opinion, the CBC is not fulfilling its mandate under the *Broadcasting Act*, nor under the *Official Languages Act*.

9. We believe that the CRTC must make it absolutely clear to the Federal Government that the Commission cannot fulfill its mandate and meet the objectives of these Acts if the CBC budget is not increased. If the Government chooses not to do that, then it must change the Broadcasting Act to match the *de facto* mandate it is imposing on the CBC through strangulation of its resources.

10. Finally, we need better access to information than is now possible by both the CRTC and CBC. ELAN would like to request that the CRTC make aggregate financial information on broadcast revenues and expenditures available by language. That is not now the case, and that causes great difficulty for submissions by an official language minority community.

11. We would also like more detailed financial information from the CBC, especially on its expenditures on official language minority programming. That was recommended by the Commissioner of Official Languages in his report "Shadows Over the Canadian Television Landscape, January, 2009".

Sincerely,

Guy Rodgers

Executive Director

English-language Arts Network of Quebec

cc- Bev Kirshenblatt, Senior Director, Regulatory Affairs, CBC

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