

[Texte]

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Mr. Meisel: Well, I have not read the report yet, but this is a problem. We have learned quite a lot from the experience in the film industry. We have learned quite a lot from the kinds of studies that you referred to—this is the CCA study. Other studies are being made now by other people which also deal with the problem in a somewhat different context.

We are, of course, aware of all this, and I am very much aware of the fact that there is a problem there that needs to be watched very closely. But I also believe that the whole world has been alerted to some of the issues and the problems, and to a very great extent the fact that we are talking about them will make it a lot easier to deal with some of these dangers.

Now, unfortunately, there are some aspects that are virtually insurmountable in terms of their problems, and perhaps I might take a minute to refer to them. Some people argue, and not everyone agrees with this, but it is implicit in the government's own broadcast document and certainly a great many people in the industry argue, and not just the pay licensees, even some producers, that you cannot spend the large sums of money required for certain kinds of expensive drama productions without finding a foreign market; that the Canadian market simply is not large enough to permit you to recoup the investment that is needed from the small Canadian market.

So to make very expensive programs, unless perhaps they are done by the CBC, you need to get partners, co-productions, and if the co-production element is large enough, then the people who put in the money expect to get something in return, and it may be a program that will respond to their particular market and not ours. I think that is a real danger and a problem for us, and we have to watch it.

Now there are other ways of dealing with that. Not all programs have to be all that expensive. They can make excellent programs of a different kind that do not cost a million dollars an hour or more, and I think we have to be alert about this. But I do believe, if we are vigilant about this, we will be able to cope.

I wonder whether Mr. Hart might want to add to this.

Mr. Hart: It might be useful to attempt to make a distinction between scaffolding and the question of the definition and what should constitute a Canadian program. They are related, but they are quite different matters. The determination as to what properly should be required of a Canadian program is to what extent the creative control, the artistic involvement, the mounting of the production is in Canadian hands. The scaffolding issue is whether or not a licensee should be credited for the foreign sales revenue from a production, whether that should be included in his financial contribution to the project. It is really that simple.

Mr. Orlikow: To come back to this question I asked earlier about the kind of monitoring, I have been told, for example, and I am sure you heard this charge, that the regular TV channels either ignore or defy our requirements.

[Traduction]

M. Meisel: Je n'ai pas encore lu le rapport mais c'est effectivement un problème. L'expérience de l'industrie cinématographique nous a beaucoup appris. Ce genre d'études sont très utiles pour nous. D'autres études ont été entreprises qui examinent le problème sous un autre angle.

Il est bien évident que ce problème devra être examiné de près. Mais tout le monde est plus ou moins au courant de ce problème actuellement et le seul fait que nous en discutons ici devrait nous aider à surmonter ce danger.

Je voudrais si vous le permettez évoquer certaines de ces difficultés. Tout le monde est plus ou moins d'accord pour dire qu'il est hors de question d'engager les gros capitaux nécessaires pour monter les pièces de théâtre sans débouchés étrangers, le marché canadien n'étant pas suffisamment important pour rentabiliser les dépenses.

Donc, à part Radio-Canada, la production d'émissions coûteuses exige la coproduction; or ceux qui avancent les capitaux peuvent imposer des conditions et notamment exiger que l'émission en question réponde aux besoins de leur public et non pas du nôtre. Cela constitue pour nous un danger réel.

Mais pas toutes les émissions doivent être tellement coûteuses. On peut en faire d'excellentes qui ne reviennent pas à 1 million de dollars l'heure. Il y a moyen de surmonter ces difficultés à condition de rester vigilant.

Je demanderais à M. Hart d'ajouter quelques mots.

M. Hart: Il faut faire la distinction entre le gonflement des investissements et la définition des émissions canadiennes. Ces deux questions bien que connexes ne sont pas identiques. La définition d'une émission canadienne dépend de la mesure dans laquelle la création artistique et le montage relèvent de Canadiens. Par contre, la question du gonflement des investissements pose la question de savoir si les titulaires de permis doivent être crédités des recettes étrangères d'une production, et s'il en sera donc tenu compte au plan de la contribution financière.

M. Orlikow: Pour en revenir maintenant à la question de la surveillance, il paraît que les sociétés de télévision ne tiennent nullement compte des conditions qui leur sont imposées.