



PETER MENZIES

# C H A N G I N G T H E C H A N N E L

A bold new vision for  
a subscription-based **CBC**

March 2025





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## Executive summary | *sommaire*

Does the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation have a future as a publicly funded broadcaster? Should it?

With a federal election looming, the fate of the CBC seems to hang in the balance. As private media organizations complain about unfair competition, and many Canadians express frustration with what they believe to be overt political bias, the Official Opposition is vowing to slash funding for the 88-year-old broadcasting corporation. The ruling Liberal government, meanwhile, warns that cuts to the CBC will severely harm Canadian culture and leave Canadians at the mercy of “fake news.” Caught in the middle are taxpayers, who pay \$1.4 billion annually to keep the “Mother Corp” afloat in both languages.

This paper deals specifically with the value and impact of the CBC – which employs one-third of the nation’s journalism labour force – as a provider of news and offers key recommendations for reshaping it for Canada’s current needs. (We must set aside the cultural component for a future analysis.)

Our review also considers the CBC’s place within the framework of national news industry policies designed to ensure citizens are provided with shared sets of facts that they can trust.

In doing so, it is important to recognize that the CBC exists within three distinct news markets: the North, francophone Canada – which has its own unique needs and demands – and anglophone Canada, also known colloquially as “RoC” – the “Rest of Canada.”

When it comes to the future of CBC’s news operations in each of these markets, we recommend the following:

- For civic, sovereignty, and security reasons, CBC North should continue to be publicly funded until it develops into a market capable of providing sufficient consumer-based support for news organizations. It must maintain journalistic objectivity in its news coverage and continue to transition into an audio and visual streaming service.
- Radio-Canada, which serves Canada’s francophone population, should also continue to receive federal funding – at least until a thorough analysis can

be done of the francophone news market. A federally funded Radio-Canada can play an important role in promoting national unity – especially by being a truly national service, not one designed as a commercially inspired service for Quebec only.

- For the anglophone market, there is a strong demand for trusted news delivered in an objective fashion. Unfortunately, public funding for CBC News – by far the largest news media player in Canada – distorts this market and fails to provide a level playing field for other news organizations seeking to serve it. Its mandate includes public interest programming and editorial independence from the government, which involves being impartial and trustworthy. It has also veered too far away from standards of neutrality and the portrayal of a balance of perspectives, especially important for a national broadcaster that ought to be representative of the diversity of views. As a result, the government has chosen to also subsidize private-sector news media, at a huge cost to Canadian taxpayers. Therefore, anglophone CBC should no longer receive federal funding. Instead, a much more targeted English-language CBC should be transitioned into a new company financed through donations and subscriptions.

The increasing dependence of public and private media on government largesse is eroding the public's trust in media in general. Our conclusion is that all forms of direct subsidy must end. We encourage public policy-makers to consider more consumer/market-based forms of funding through donations and subscriptions, especially as media continues to transition and evolve into largely internet-based platforms.

There is a significant market for a subscription-based English CBC news service. Canada has approximately 15 million homes, which, based on a \$30/month subscription, converts into \$5.4 billion in annual revenue potential. If the CBC was able to convert just 10 per cent of that amount, it would have a stable base of \$540 million to operate. Meanwhile, Canada's media landscape would become a far more level playing field, and the CBC would be more accountable to the desires for better and more representative programming from its audience.

This proposal presents a bold opportunity to free the CBC from government reliance and create a media model driven by the people it serves. A subscription-based system would not only provide financial independence but also establish a direct, accountable relationship between the CBC and Canadians. Ultimately, this approach would promote healthier competition within the media landscape, encouraging innovation and providing a stronger, more dynamic Canadian media ecosystem. **MLI**

La Canadian Broadcasting Corporation a-t-elle un avenir en tant que diffuseur public subventionné? Doit-elle y être promise?

À l'approche des élections fédérales, son avenir paraît incertain. Tandis que les médias privés se plaignent de sa concurrence déloyale et que de nombreux Canadiens expriment une frustration avec le flagrant biais politique qu'ils perçoivent, l'opposition officielle s'engage à réduire le budget de cette institution fondée il y a 88 ans. De son côté, le gouvernement libéral actuel met en garde des graves préjudices que peuvent entraîner les coupes pour la culture et la population, laquelle serait ainsi laissée à la merci des « fausses nouvelles ». Les contribuables se retrouvent coincés entre les deux. Chaque année, ils investissent 1,4 milliard de dollars pour soutenir la « société-mère » dans les deux langues officielles.

Ce document porte précisément sur la valeur et l'apport du diffuseur en tant que fournisseur de nouvelles – lequel emploie le tiers des journalistes du pays – et présente des recommandations pour l'adapter aux besoins actuels du Canada. (L'élément culturel fera l'objet d'une analyse ultérieure.)

Le présent examen traite aussi de place de la CBC au sein des politiques nationales d'un secteur qui vise à assurer l'accès des citoyens à un ensemble commun de faits sur lequel s'appuyer. Dans cette optique, il convient de souligner la présence de la CBC sur trois marchés : le Nord, le Canada francophone – qui présente des besoins et des exigences lui étant propres – et le Canada anglophone, appelé communément « RdC » ou « reste du Canada ».

Concernant l'avenir des activités médiatiques de la CBC sur ces marchés, voici nos recommandations :

- Par civisme et pour des raisons de souveraineté ou de sécurité, il est impératif que la CBC North/SRC Nord bénéficie d'un financement public jusqu'à ce que le marché présente un seuil suffisant pour les organes de presse locaux. Elle doit préserver l'objectivité journalistique dans sa couverture de l'actualité et poursuivre sa transition vers la diffusion de contenus audiovisuels.
- La Société Radio-Canada doit également recevoir un financement pour répondre aux besoins de la population francophone, et ce, au moins jusqu'à la réalisation d'une analyse approfondie du marché. Une SRC financée par le gouvernement fédéral peut jouer un rôle clé pour promouvoir l'unité nationale – en se présentant comme un service véritablement national, et non pas un service inspiré par un motif commercial pour le Québec seulement.
- La demande d'informations fiables et objectives est en hausse sur le marché anglophone. Il est regrettable que le financement public de la CBC News – de loin le plus grand diffuseur au Canada – perturbe ce marché sans garantir une concurrence équitable pour les autres médias. Il est chargé notamment de la programmation d'intérêt public et doit faire preuve d'indépendance éditoriale vis-à-vis du gouvernement, ce qui exige son impartialité et son intégrité. Or, la



*CBC a aussi dérogé des normes de neutralité et d'équilibre des perspectives, cruciales pour un radiodiffuseur national représentatif de la diversité des opinions. Conséquemment, le gouvernement a choisi de subventionner également les médias privés, ce qui coûte très cher aux contribuables. La CBC anglophone ne devrait donc plus bénéficier d'aide fédérale. Une CBC de langue anglaise, bien mieux ciblée, devrait évoluer vers une nouvelle entité financée par des dons et des abonnements.*

*La dépendance accrue des médias, tant publics que privés, à l'égard des largesses gouvernementales compromet la confiance du public à leur égard. Nous concluons qu'il faut mettre fin à toutes les formes de subventions directes. Nous incitons les décideurs publics à envisager des modes de financement axés sur le consommateur et le marché, notamment par le biais de dons et d'abonnements, d'autant plus que les médias poursuivent leur transition vers Internet.*

*Il existe un marché important pour l'abonnement au service d'information de langue anglaise de la CBC. Le Canada dénombre environ 15 millions de foyers, ce qui, sur la base d'un abonnement mensuel de 30 dollars, équivaut à un potentiel de revenus annuels de 5,4 milliards de dollars. Si la CBC captait ne serait-ce que 10 % de ce marché, elle récolterait 540 millions de dollars pour son fonctionnement. Parallèlement, le paysage médiatique canadien évoluerait vers une plus équité beaucoup plus grande, et la CBC serait plus encline à tenir compte des attentes de son public pour une programmation de meilleure qualité et plus représentative.*

*Cette proposition ouvre la voie à une occasion unique de libérer la CBC de sa dépendance vis-à-vis du gouvernement pour créer un modèle de média dirigé par les gens qu'elle sert. Un système d'abonnement assurerait non seulement l'indépendance financière, mais aussi une relation directe et responsable entre la CBC et la population. En définitive, cette approche créerait une concurrence plus saine dans les médias, favorisant ainsi l'innovation et renforçant l'écosystème médiatique canadien. [MLI](#)*

## Introduction

For the better part of a century, the Canadian media landscape has been dominated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), which was not created by market forces but through political action.

Today, it is again the subject of political debate and the decision as to whether and how it survives into a second century will ultimately be political. To undertake a policy discussion under such circumstances is, to say the least, challenging. That is because while much of the discussion surrounding the CBC involves its coverage of news and, in particular, politics, it plays a far greater role within the Canadian media ecosystem. It is central to Canada's cultural and entertainment industries, and the success of its French-language entertainment programming is just as key to its future as is the failure of its English-language programming.

The entanglements there are significant and involve debates not only concerning market forces but also “public good” discussions surrounding the benefits of providing Canadians with high-quality Canadian cultural content – made by Canadians. These vital discussions and considerations are even more important today as Canada faces an aggressive American neighbour seemingly intent on reviving “manifest destiny” on the continent.

This paper is about providing policy, not political, advice.

Given the pressing nature and immensity of the debate, the most effective way to fulsomely discuss policy options for the CBC is to separate it into two papers – one that examines the CBC in isolation, and a second that focuses on the broader news, media, and culture ecosystem. That, in turn, will help inform the next phase of the dilemma: how Canada's cultural industries should be supported in a manner that allows them to contribute to and sustain a national civic aesthetic and whether the CBC has a role in that.



This paper, which examines CBC’s news operations, unfolds in three sections. The first provides necessary background and context. The second involves the analysis of three possible scenarios, from reductions in scope to defunding to refunding. The final section explores CBC’s three distinct Canadian markets and offers recommendations on how it should function in each of these within the context of a national policy framework.

We laid out the basis for a national news media industry policy in the 2023 Macdonald-Laurier Institute paper titled *And now, the news: A national news media policy for Canada*. Its goals remain and inform this paper: to ensure fair commercial treatment for Canada’s news producers while maintaining public trust and allowing for a free and independent news media to flourish.

## Background

The federal government of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett created the precursor to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1932 to ensure that Canada did not become overwhelmed by American cultural content and retained the capacity to support and enrich its unique culture. The passage of the *Radio Broadcasting Act* – as recommended by the 1929 Aird Commission (formally titled the Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting) – came in response to concerns raised about the content broadcast by some of the privately operated stations already in existence. These included derogatory comments broadcast by Joseph Rutherford, the leader of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, regarding both Roman Catholic and mainstream Protestant churches, and the practices of radio station CHUC in Saskatoon, which broadcast speeches by Ku Klux Klan grand wizard J.J. Maloney (McGowan 2008).

The Canadian Radio Broadcast Commission’s (CRBC) original purpose was to be both a regulator (a duty eventually assigned to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission/CRTC) and a broadcaster. Indeed, the original concept (never acted upon) involved the eventual takeover by the CRBC of all private radio stations in the country. At the time, approximately one-third of households owned a radio, for which they paid an annual fee of \$1 to the federal government (Greenall 2023).

According to the CPI Inflation Calculator, in 2025 dollars, that is equivalent to almost \$18.

Understanding these origins makes it easier to understand how, over the years, CBC management's understanding of the corporation's role in society differs from how many may view it today. In its original form, for instance, the CBC was so powerful that the role of private sector broadcasters was supplementary. The CBC wasn't just one part of the broadcasting system – it was the system.

What follows are some key points in its development from 1932 until today:

- 1936: CBC Radio begins officially broadcasting on November 2, 1936, with its first broadcast in both English and French, reflecting Canada's bilingual nature. This marks the beginning of national radio broadcasting in Canada.
- 1952: CBC ventures into television, launching its first TV service on September 6, 1952. This move significantly expands its reach and influence, providing Canadians with domestic programming alongside international content.
- 1960s–1970s: CBC expands its programming, focusing on a mix of news, drama, documentaries, and cultural shows. This period sees the CBC becoming a key player in defining Canadian identity, with shows like *Hockey Night in Canada* becoming cultural staples.
- 1980s: The CBC faces competitive challenges to its dominance from cable television and later, satellite TV. It responds by diversifying its content and engaging in more international co-productions. The introduction of CBC Newsworld (now CBC News Network) in 1989 is part of this strategy.
- 1990s: The CBC experiences cuts of up to 28 per cent overall in its budget due to decreases in government funding and the perceived need for efficiencies in its operations.
- 2000s: The digital era brings new challenges and opportunities. CBC launches its website, cbc.ca, in 1997, but significantly expands its digital presence in the 2000s. The corporation also deals with funding issues, leading to debates over its mandate and funding model.

- 2010s: CBC continues to build its footprint in the digital landscape, focusing on online content, streaming services, and mobile apps. The launch of CBC Gem in 2018 provides a platform for both on-demand and live streaming of CBC content. The loss of rights to *Hockey Night in Canada* in 2013 strips it of one of its most iconic programs. During this time, perceptions of undue political bias begin to rise and, most controversially, the CBC sues (eventually without success) the Conservative Party of Canada for copyright violation during the 2019 federal election (Gollom 2021).
- 2020s: Facing financial pressures, changing viewer habits, and public scrutiny over its mandate and funding, CBC has been navigating not only a complex media environment but an increasingly polarized political atmosphere. Attempts to satisfy activists favouring trans rights and climate change, for instance, have been viewed as beyond the mainstream by some while others have embraced it as appropriately progressive (Fenlon 2024). Private sector media, in the meantime, continues to struggle to adapt to the digital world and resents CBC's dominant presence.
- One in three Canadian journalists works for the CBC which, according to its 2023–24 annual report, employs more than 7,000 people (2024). Headquartered in Ottawa, its two main networks are based in Toronto (English) and Montreal (French). The CBC has offices, studios, and bureaus across the country, including in Iqaluit and Inuvik in the Far North. There are five foreign bureaus. These support 27 TV stations, 88 radio stations and one digital-only station – Radio-Canada International – that now acts largely as an multicultural radio service broadcasting in seven languages. CBC also operates five discretionary TV channels and four nationwide radio networks, two in English and two in French. CBC North broadcasts in English, French, and eight Indigenous languages – Dehcho Dene Yait, Sahtu Got'ine Godi, Inuvialuktun, Gwich'in, Eastern Cree, Tlicho, Inuktitut, and Chipewyan.

It is important to note that the issue of bias in journalism is not new. It has existed throughout the history of journalism on all platforms. Indeed, the notion of “journalistic objectivity” in news coverage only arose in the early

years of the 20th Century, significantly prompted by a 1920 42-page study by Walter Lipman and Charles Merz published by *The New Republic* (Schudson 2007). Poignantly, Lipman and Merz's study came in response to a perceived "crisis of Western democracy."

Over the decades, news organizations and, more recently, journalism schools have often wandered from this aspiration, whether in times of war or feverish political eras (such as the 1950s, when the threat of communist expansion and nuclear war was ever present). In the 1960s, the Vietnam War, government corruption, and civil rights issues, coupled with a climate of social activism, inspired many journalists to eschew objectivity in favour of "taking a stand" against injustice. By the 1970s, universities were increasingly embracing postmodernism, which argues that truth is subjective and shaped by cultural, social, and political forces – especially by the powerful. Journalism schools also began to teach "deconstruction" and "critical theory," encouraging student journalists to acknowledge and even embrace their biases.

With the advent of the 24-hour news cycle, the internet and social media algorithms encouraged sensationalism, commentary, and emotional engagement rather than dispassionate reporting. The 2016 election of United States President Donald Trump was the straw that broke the camel's back, after which media began to aggressively abandon the aspiration to objectivity.

Ironically, while the public still desires objective news reporting, many working journalists increasingly feel that this discipline shackles the "truth." The rise of activist-journalism has coincided with plummeting levels of trust in news media and, in Canada, a more intense focus on the CBC's presentations of it.

In summary, for most of its history the CBC has played the role its founding legislation envisioned: promoting Canadian culture, arts, and national unity. However, while it has often been at the centre of debates regarding its funding, perceived biases, and the role of public broadcasting in the modern era, its existence has never been questioned – until now.

## Controversy

As described in the previous section, the CBC has been involved in several debates concerning its role, its funding, its bias, and its competition with private sector operators.

The relationship with private sector broadcasters has often been contentious, beginning with the government's 1932 intention to essentially nationalize the industry. While that never came about, institutional memories can be long. Over-the-air television proprietors frequently complained about paying taxes that in part went to support CBC television which, in turn, used that money to compete against them for advertising revenue (Ahearn 2021).

The CBC's most vocal opponent in this century has been Pierre-Karl Peladeau of Quebecor Inc., which through Quebecor Media operates TVA, Quebec's leading private sector TV broadcaster. The organizations have clashed several times and, as recently as 2023, Peladeau demanded that the CRTC "immediately withdraw all advertising from CBC (including Radio-Canada) platforms" (Dougherty 2023).

It was one matter for the CBC to impact the profitability of private media outlets. But as private broadcasters and publishers saw the lion's share of their advertising revenue shift to social media and search engines, competition from the publicly funded CBC became difficult to accept.

At 2016 hearings held by the House of Commons Heritage Committee, journalist Brian Lilley, who at the time was representing *Rebel News*, told the committee:

"You can't have a level playing field when the public broadcaster... has decided that they want to be all things to all people," said Lilley. "I will tell you emphatically that the CBC has been violating the *Broadcast Act* [sic] and their mandate for a long time."

Lilley, now a columnist with the *Toronto Sun*, was joined by Phillip Crawley, the publisher of the *Globe and Mail* and several others critical of CBC's growing presence online.

"It's not level if taxpayer dollars directed to the public broadcaster make the competition for digital ad dollars more difficult," Crawley said. "The CBC is the *Globe's* largest competitor in the digital ad space amongst Canadian-based

media” (Crawley quoted in Cheadle 2016). Crawley, at the time, insisted the *Globe* was not seeking “handouts or subsidies.”

Rather than address the issue of the CBC’s competition for increasingly rare advertising dollars, the government created – at the request of a newspaper industry lobby group, News Media Canada – a series of tax credits and other funds meeting the definition of “handouts and subsidies.” The federal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau introduced programs such as the Journalism Labour Tax Credit and Local Journalism Initiative as temporary measures but they have been extended and increased in size so that they are, for all intents and purposes, permanent.

“Rather than address the issue of the CBC’s competition for ... advertising dollars, the government created a series of ... “handouts and subsidies.”

To level the playing field, the federal government passed the *Online News Act*, which sought to make social media companies such as Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and search engines such as Google pay news organizations, including the CBC, hundreds of millions of dollars. But the lack of a business case for it resulted in a Facebook and Instagram ban on news links in Canada, which further harmed the bottom lines of news companies. Instead of being a catalyst for hundreds of millions in new cash, the act instead forced Google to create a \$100 million fund. Of that amount, the federal Department of Heritage limited the portion allocated to the CBC to \$7 million, which the broadcaster immediately used to hire 30 journalists in 22 communities (Canadian Press 2025). CBC is allocating half of those jobs to Western Canada.

Critics of CBC’s federal funding often point to its shifting coverage priorities, such as an increased emphasis on climate and progressive social change, that serve to alienate many conservative Canadians. As one example, critics have pointed to the membership of CBC’s influential *At Issue* news-pundit panel, noting in particular that panel members



typically live in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto, and that none represented conservative views.

The CBC's decision to sue the Conservative Party (ultimately unsuccessfully) in the stretch run of the 2019 federal election sealed the impression among many Conservative Members of Parliament and their supporters that their tax dollars support an agency willing to use its influence against them (Lowman 2024).

Following the Liberal Party's election victory in 2015, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper's subsequent departure from politics, his three Conservative successors have rallied support among party members by vowing to "defund the CBC." However, while both Andrew Scheer (2019) and Erin O'Toole (2021) de-emphasized that ambition in their ensuing election campaigns, the current Conservative Leader, Pierre Poilievre seems intent on following through on his pledge to slash funding for the CBC – or possibly eliminate it entirely.

The next section explores the options presented by defunding the CBC.

## Problem and options

CBC's problems cannot be dealt with in isolation because of the massive revolution in the way people consume the news and how it is reported. The digital revolution and explosion of online news – and the CBC's move into that space – is putting intense pressure on private Canadian news organizations to compete.

If nothing changes, then we could foreseeably see a return to the 1930–1960 period when CBC dominated the media landscape (at least in broadcasting, as the print industry was very healthy during that time).

"Improving" the CBC – so that it becomes even more appealing to news consumers – not only fails to address the underlying economic dysfunction of the industry in its current state, but it also quite possibly further undermines it. An improved CBC that's still publicly funded will likely lead to increasingly strident calls from private media to see their subsidies rise as well.

If Canada is to have a healthy, competitive, market-force-based news media industry, then the essential structure of the CBC must be reformed. Here are some practical options that policy-makers should consider:

## Option 1: Serious reform

The current federal government argues that it must renew the mandate and role of the CBC, and there was no indication otherwise from candidates for the Liberal Party's leadership.

The recommendations made in *And Now the News* (Menzies and Finckenstein 2023) regarding changes to the CBC largely remain relevant, with some new developments adding complexity to the issue.

The following mandates would improve Canada's news industry framework:

- Given that Canadians hold a variety of perspectives, the CBC and Radio-Canada must present the news in a fair, accurate, and balanced fashion reflecting all relevant points of view. The goal should be to inform, not sway, readers, viewers, and listeners. An independent agency (based in a foreign country) should monitor the CBC/Radio-Canada to ensure adherence to these principles and report its findings annually.
- Diversity must be a crucial consideration for CBC news/pundit panels – but this must include diversity of opinion and also reflect voices from all regions of the country.
- The CBC/Radio-Canada should not shy away from Canada's failings, but it also must aspire to celebrate its accomplishments, history, culture, and languages. The goal of a national broadcaster should be to foster greater national unity and share Canada's strong, distinct, and vibrant cultures.
- To be a truly national broadcaster, the CBC/Radio-Canada must be decentralized from its Toronto and Montreal headquarters to broaden cultural understanding and ensure input from decision-makers across the country.
- Competition with private media organizations for advertising dollars must end. This practice distorts the market and diminishes revenue opportunities for private sector news media. It also risks distorting CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate by encouraging it to focus on primary advertising markets in Toronto and Montreal at the expense of service to the rest of the country.
- CBC should begin the process of decommissioning its over-the-air infrastructure and accelerate its transition (CBC 2024) into an

entirely digital platform, where distinctions between audio, visual, and text-based media merge into one.

- Private news organizations should be permitted to freely publish all CBC news content as long as they give credit to its source, the CBC. Since CBC’s content is publicly funded, it should be considered a public asset available for republication following its initial posting, publication, and/or broadcast by CBC/Radio-Canada. In the early years of CBC News (initiated in 1941), this was a common practice.
- CBC/Radio-Canada services should be restricted to: one over-the-air television service, one over-the-air radio service, and digital content availability in each official language; one all-news network available in each official language via BDU (i.e., cable, satellite, and fibre TV) and/or online; CBC North and Radio-Canada Nord available via television, radio, and online – each based on one official language but with numerous Indigenous language options.
- If CBC/Radio-Canada continues to be publicly funded, then 100 per cent of its content should be Canadian-made. According to the *CBC Annual Report 2023–2024* regulatory requirements for “Canadian content” on English prime time television was 87 per cent; French-language Ici-Tele must feature 90 per cent Canadian content (2024, 27).
- CBC/Radio-Canada must maintain bureaus in every province and territory; and their news networks – CBCNN and ICI-RDI – must carry daily reports from each province and territory. This would amount to a one- or two-minute- report every two hours.

Changes such as these would address some of the performance issues and improve the news industry playing field. But they would not level it or allow it to flourish. The stronger and more embedded the CBC becomes – according to Department of Heritage estimates, it currently employs one in three Canadian journalists (Paas-Lang 2023) – the more difficult it becomes for alternative voices to thrive. So far, the government’s solution consists of publicly funding those news media as well, which has created a de facto if unintentional national policy that, while unspoken, is clear: the fate of news media in Canada is in the hands of the government in power.

This is not a good public policy as, while sustaining certain organizations, it undermines public trust in journalism, places journalists in a blatant conflict of interest, undermines freedom of the press, debases democracy, and creates barriers for innovation and new entrants.

### **Option 2: Reduce or eliminate?**

The option to seriously reduce or eliminate key components of the CBC must be on the table considering the intractable problems it faces. The CBC's mandate includes public interest programming and editorial independence from the government, which includes being impartial and trustworthy. Long-founded standards of journalistic integrity include factual reporting and attempts at eliminating bias. To properly fulfill its mandate, it would have to ensure a broader representation of views of the public, who it ultimately serves. Unfortunately, so long as the CBC receives public funding, it will remain vulnerable to accusations of bias – in other words, actively supporting the government hand that feeds it. This is incommensurate with the mandate of a public broadcaster.

Furthermore, the CBC's large market share distorts the nature and quality of the wider news media industry. Private media organizations, faced with a heavily subsidized competitor, are demanding the same public support simply to try to compete on a level playing field. Thanks to recent federal subsidies, the Canadian news media industry has grown overly dependent on government for its very existence – something that both hurts its dynamism and removes incentives for better and more creative business practices. In a rapidly changing technological environment, government-funding journalism undermines the integrity of a free and independent press, which, in turn, erodes public trust.

Against this backdrop, policy-makers should seriously consider reducing the size of the CBC – or eliminating it altogether.

So far, the Conservative Party is the only federal party that has stated a clear intention to, at a minimum, significantly slash the CBC's funding. Depending on the amount, this could be quite the complicated undertaking. The party's initial political commitment to “defund the CBC” has generally been interpreted as aiming to remove at least \$1 billion from the amount annually allocated to it by Parliament. What follows is a high level overview of the impact that would have on the CBC as it is currently constituted.

Based on its most recent annual report, the corporation's revenue totaled \$1.930 billion of which \$1.437 billion was provided by Parliament (2024, 32). This was up from \$1.272 billion the previous year as the government increased support to cover declining advertising and subscription revenues. Those, in 2024, were \$213 million for CBC (target \$287 million) and \$214 million (target \$293 million) for Radio-Canada.

Removal of \$1 billion would amount to a 53 per cent budget cut. For this to be survivable, the corporation and its mandate would have to be entirely reshaped, and new revenue streams acquired, possibly making it even more of a competitor with the private sector.

Possible expense reductions and revenue opportunities include:

- *Layoffs of approximately 4,000 people.* The majority of these would have to be in accordance with collective bargain agreements. It is not possible to provide anything beyond ballpark estimates, but the cost based on 3 weeks' pay per year of service using an average of 15 years' service and an average salary of \$60,000 amounts to an average severance of just under \$52,000 per employee (CBC/Radio-Canada 2025). Multiply that by 4,000 (CBC had 7,727 FTEs as of April 2024) and \$208 million is the estimated cost of severance. As the CBC does not currently have the capacity to pay that other than through salary continuance it is unclear how this could be managed on a short-term basis. If it could be – mortgaging or sale of real estate or other assets is one possibility – the long-term benefit based on an average cost per employee of \$70,000 (costs are greater than salaries as they include benefits, equipment, overhead) would be roughly \$280 million. Another \$720 million in savings or new revenue would still be required to make up for a \$1 billion reduction.
- *Consolidation of services.* Options include reducing radio services from two to one, merging cable news networks CBCNN and RDI with over the air CBC News and Ici Tele and the elimination of branches such as CBC Sports, CBC North and RDI. The majority of cost savings in these areas would come, however, from staff reductions that are already calculated in the previous point. Other operating and overhead cost savings are unlikely to amount to much more than \$30 million (a dead reckoning estimate) but even if they

are \$50 million, the corporation would require another \$670 million in expense reductions.

- According to an analysis done by MLI contributor David Clinton (2024), CBC spends a total of roughly \$315 million annually on non-news programming that includes drama/comedy, films, animation, music/variety, game shows, human interest, reality TV, award shows and other categories. This compares with approximately \$284 million on news, analysis/interpretation, long-form documentary and other information. If CBC became a news-only organization, \$315 million in expenses could be eliminated. A 20 per cent cut in the news budget could bring another \$50 million in savings. But the CBC would remain \$305 million short of a balanced budget unless it were able to access new revenue streams.

### *Conclusion*

Clinton's analysis is the most thorough available publicly. Yet what remains unknown is how the CBC calculates each of these costs and why – beyond core functions such as news, sports and entertainment programming – it currently spends an additional \$397 million. Certainly, capital costs and maintenance of infrastructure are involved, but without that information, further analysis is not possible. Based on what is known, even a massively reduced and restructured CBC/RC cannot survive a \$1 billion funding cut as a service in two official languages without creating new revenue streams.

Clinton's analysis shows that the cost of CBC amounts to \$996 million for English services and \$816 million for French services. Yes, this raises the question of why the CBC has decided to spend 45 per cent of its budget to serve the 19 per cent of Canadians who speak French in the home (Al Mallees 2022), but that discussion is for another day. What the numbers do indicate – on the face of it – is that the most straightforward way to achieve a \$1 billion cut to CBC is through the elimination of all English services.

But it's not that simple. Because if English costs go away, so does English revenue of at least \$213 million in advertising and subscriptions. That means that a surviving Radio-Canada could not be maintained in its current form unless new sources of income can be created.



### Option 3: New revenue

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is currently examining options for supporting Canadian film and television production as well as news.

In its initial decision, the CRTC required offshore streaming services to pay five per cent of their Canadian revenues into funds to support film/television programming and news production for licenced broadcasters (CRTC 2024). That levy is estimated to be worth a total of \$200 million. Currently that is the subject of court challenges as impacted companies object to the rationale behind music services such as Spotify and entertainment services such as Netflix – whose businesses have no relationship to news – having to support journalism. Should the courts uphold the CRTC's ability to demand these fees, it's possible it could consider using mechanisms like this to support a "defunded" CBC and/or Radio-Canada. An additional five per cent levy could provide CBC with \$200 million annually.

There are numerous complications; if the Conservative Party wins a majority government, it has also committed to eliminate the *Online Streaming Act*, which amended the *Broadcasting Act* (Government of Canada 1991) to give the CRTC the authority to regulate all audio and visual content on the internet and oversee offshore streamers. There is also a good chance that Canada's approach to using mostly US-based companies to fund Canadian cultural objectives – already viewed dimly south of the border under President Joe Biden – becomes even more problematic under President Donald Trump.

So, what appears possible now may not be possible in the near future.

Furthermore, with cable and satellite subscriptions in decline (Hudes 2024), it is unlikely there is any capacity to tap those for greater contributions to Canadian film and television, let alone journalism or the CBC, specifically.

But the CRTC has other options.

One of the more obvious models would be licencing support of the ability to sell subscriptions and/or solicit donations. CKUA Radio in Edmonton, while commercially licenced, has a long history as Alberta's public radio and has successfully sustained itself through annual fund-raising drives for many years. *The Guardian* newspaper and Wikipedia are other examples of organizations that raise money through voluntary subscriptions while others such as the *Globe and Mail*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Times of London* only allow access

to their content through paid subscriptions. Shifting public funding from an annual Parliamentary allocation to direct support through some form of user pay model could be considered.

As previously noted, there are approximately 15 million households in Canada. At a monthly subscription rate of \$30, that's a potential pool of \$5.4 billion annually.

Another possibility is for the CRTC to raise money to support the CBC through a tax on Internet Service Provider (ISP) revenues like the levy currently placed on cable/satellite and streaming company revenues to support Canadian content and news. This would, like the levies currently in place, inevitably be passed along to consumers in the form of higher subscription fees, but a five per cent levy on the \$12 billion in annual revenues would produce \$600 million.

If that all sounds messy and chaotic, it's because it is – and it would continue to be in the absence of a national policy framework for the news and cultural industries.

*First and foremost: eliminate the vast and growing subsidy regime*

Most of the major policies implemented and proposed concerning media over the past decade – such as the *Online News Act* and *Online Streaming Act* – have been reactive, preservationist, and not coordinated under a broader vision (although the *Digital Charter* introduced by the federal government in 2019 was an effort at that (Government of Canada 2019)).

It served as the foundation for Bill C-27, the government's effort at privacy reform, which died when, on the advice of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Governor General prorogued Parliament in January 2025. Bill C-27, which attempted to regulate artificial intelligence (AI), met the same fate as did Bill C-63, the *Online Harms Act*, and Bill S-210, which intended to introduce age verification on the internet.

The *Online Streaming Act*, which did pass, involved what the government called the “modernization” of the 1993 *Broadcasting Act*. The *Online Streaming Act's* core flaw is its failure to recognize that while there is content on the internet that resembles traditional audio and video associated with broadcasting, the internet is an entirely new means of communication. It is not broadcasting. Putting the internet, a development every bit as profound as the invention of the printing press, under the control of an agency with the archaic title of a “radio-television” commission highlights that misunderstanding of events.

What Canada needs is a modern approach to how it oversees communications – one that recognizes the internet as the new basis for how people create and consume information. That should involve the development of a new *Canadian Communications Act* incorporating the *Telecommunications Act* and the *Broadcasting Act* and the establishment of a new Canadian Communications Commission to replace the CRTC.

That is a larger topic, but one of the features that must devolve from that is a national news industry policy, and what, if any, role the CBC might have in it.

Canada's legacy news media platforms have struggled to transition to the digital era. The Trudeau government's response has been to introduce a subsidy regime primarily based on the Journalism Labour Tax Credit, the Local Journalism Initiative, the Canada Periodicals Fund and the \$100 million fund established by Google in exchange for being exempted from the *Online News Act*. That fund is distributed to qualifying news organizations, with the CBC, despite its size, restricted to \$7 million annually.

There are digital holdout news organizations that still maintain the industry's historical view that taking government money is a conflict of interest fatal to the maintenance of public trust in a free and independent press, but they are few. The result is most Canadian news sources today are increasingly dependent on the public purse for their existence and most of those that aren't (broadcasters) are lobbying the CRTC to become so. Unless something changes, these subsidies will continue to grow. Soon, with a very few bold exceptions<sup>1</sup>, the entire news industry will essentially be a Crown corporation, if not a department of government.

This is no way to maintain public trust in journalism or freedom of the press. One need only point to the glaring lack of published/posted viewpoints critical of the subsidies within the pages and on the websites of news organizations that have lobbied for and/or receive subsidies. This strongly suggests that subsidized media are willing to suppress debate of certain legislation when it is in their self-interest to do so.

Only once this vast subsidy regime is removed will news organizations be free to succeed or fail based on their appeal to readers, viewers, and listeners. In this new media landscape, driven by market principles, the most innovative media organizations would likely rise to the top.

## Markets and recommendations

As previously noted, the CBC is currently the biggest player in the Canadian news industry, receiving \$1.4 billion in annual federal funding that gives it a tremendous advantage over private media organizations. The CBC's value needs to be viewed through three different "public good" and "market" lenses.

### Market 1: The North

Canada's vast Arctic and subarctic is typically defined as the area north of the 60th parallel that separates the territories from the provinces. To all intents and purposes that definition just as easily applies to the areas (with some exception for Alberta) north of the 55th parallel in Western Canada and north of the 50th in the rest of the country. It can also be described as the Canadian Shield. It is so sparsely populated that it doesn't represent a consumer market. But that doesn't mean its citizens shouldn't be served.

The provision of news and information to the people of the North is vital to maintaining their sense of inclusion as citizens and confirming Canada's sovereignty over the region. And while affordable internet connectivity, once it becomes ubiquitous, will allow Northern citizens to access multiple news sources, the provision of local information in local languages (the Northwest Territories has nine official languages) can only be done – outside the larger centres – through public platforms. Physical and cultural connectivity are vital to the maintenance of sovereignty in regions that bear massive natural resources key to the nation's future. This is a clear public good.

#### *Summary:*

Canada's Far North is too thinly populated to be considered as a region that could be served by market forces.

#### *Recommendations:*

- As part of a national news policy the government maintain CBC North with a refreshed mandate rededicated to the provision of news of specific interest to Northerners through objective, fact-based reporting.
- CBC North be permitted to gather revenue from advertising, at least until the market matures.

- As internet connectivity becomes more available and affordable, CBC North should continue to transition from an over-the-air service to an internet-based streaming and text service. This will reduce costs in terms of the maintenance of, for example, broadcast towers.

## Market 2: Francophone Canada

Radio-Canada serves francophone Canadians across the country but primarily those who live in Quebec, the Ottawa Valley, and New Brunswick.

It is a primary source of news, entertainment, and other information for those communities, particularly in La Belle Province. Radio-Canada's digital reach (monthly average unique visitors) is 5.2 million compared to the CBC English version's reach of 15.9 million (*Annual Report 2024, 23*). Considering French is the mother tongue of 22 percent of Canadians (19.2 per cent speak French in the home) this indicates high levels of connectivity with the francophone market (Statistics Canada 2022).

“CBC is currently the biggest player in the Canadian news industry, receiving \$1.4 billion in annual federal funding.”

In terms of television, *Ici Tele* is popular, with 23.4 per cent of its target audience watching it during prime viewing hours. This compares with 5.2 per cent for CBC Television. CBC News Network gathers a 2 per cent share compared with the 6.2 per cent recorded by ICI, RDI, ARTV and ICI Explora. In radio, ICI Premiere and ICI Musique reached 24.8 per cent of the market, almost 80 per cent more than CBC Radio One and CBC Music's 14.6 per cent.

Also, Radio-Canada earned marginally more revenue – \$214 million – than CBC, which gathered \$213 million the most recent year. (It should again be noted that Radio-Canada also is funded at a per capita level far more than its English counterpart.)

As stated accurately in the 1991 *Broadcasting Act*, the English and French markets are distinct. The minority official language market exists primarily due to a longstanding practice of cultural protectionism designed to preserve the French language in North America. It is also a much more captive market.

While bilingualism is growing, a large percentage of Quebecers remain unilingual francophones (Statistics Canada 2023). This does not mean the francophone industry there doesn't have to compete with foreign news platforms, but it does make it less vulnerable to American sources and signals. Furthermore, the policy culture in Quebec, where 90 per cent of Canadian francophones live, is deeply attached to the concept of protectionist subsidies.

Whether that is wise or sustainable is certainly debatable, but the only practical approach to a national news industry policy currently is to treat the French and English markets as distinct and the same goes for Radio-Canada and the CBC.

***Summary:***

Radio-Canada is seen by many Canadians to be a necessary voice for preservation of the French language and national unity within the Quebec market. Maintaining a Canadian presence in Quebec is especially important for national unity given that Radio-Canada's main competitor, TVA, is owned by Quebecor and Pierre-Karl Peladeau, a separatist and former leader of the Parti Québécois. Radio-Canada serves a necessary public good – national unity and preservation of the French language – while successfully serving consumer needs and interests.

***Recommendations:***

- The federal government should continue to support Radio-Canada for the time being while policy-makers study the francophone market to better understand how market forces can support Canada's francophone news industry.
- Ottawa should consider introducing subscription-based content management, as well as grant Radio-Canada the ability to receive donations that could replace advertising revenue. Further determinations should then be made and informed by the recommended evolutions in the anglophone market.



- Radio-Canada should be encouraged as a condition of funding to continue its transition into the digital world as affordable access to the internet becomes ubiquitous.
- Radio-Canada's news coverage must be presented in a fair, accurate, and balanced fashion reflecting multiple points of view. Adherence to these principles will be monitored by an independent agency and reported on annually.
- Radio-Canada pundit panels should reflect the nation's diversity – but that also includes diversity of perspectives. They should include voices from across the country, not just large urban centres.
- Radio-Canada should be honest about Canada's failings – but must also aspire to celebrate its accomplishments, history, culture, and languages and, through that, contribute not only to national unity but also to a strong, distinct, and vibrant culture emphasizing values of courage, self-reliance, empathy, and compassion.
- Radio-Canada must work to decentralize decision-making from its Montreal headquarters.
- Radio-Canada, through RDI, should provide coverage of events across Canada, and ensure that a minimum number of reports are delivered on an hourly basis. ICI Premiere's newscasts should also include nationwide coverage, and be of interest to all francophone Canadians, not just those concentrated in Quebec.
- News content – in original and translated form, should be available, at no cost, to private sector and charitable media throughout all markets in Canada

### **Market 3: Anglophone Canada**

As with the other markets, CBC's future must be considered through the lens of a national news media industry policy. The latter should be based on the reality that, as is pointed out in the *Broadcasting Act*, the French and English markets are distinct, as is the North.

Currently, all but a handful of news organizations in anglophone Canada benefit from either the guardianship of the CRTC's long-standing market management practices, its news support fund, or federal subsidies such as the Journalism Labour Tax Credit (JLTC), the Local Journalism

Initiative (LJI), and the Canada Periodical fund. Industry lobbyists are also seeking provincial taxpayer assistance and have successfully convinced the Ontario government to divert 25 per cent of its advertising to provincial publishers as a form of subsidy.

As was outlined in the 2023 MLI paper *And Now The News*, these subsidies should be decommissioned throughout all markets and replaced with tax credits that subsidize the consumption of news by Canadians as opposed to the provision of news to them, regardless of whether they read it.

This recognizes the public good that comes with fostering a well-informed citizenry. It also mitigates the erosion of public trust that occurs when subsidized media is seen to be beholden to their funders, i.e., government/politicians (Statistics Canada 2024). Direct subsidies also prop up inefficient businesses while stifling entrepreneurship and innovation. Indeed, polls show that many Canadians fear public funding is undermining the independence of newsrooms under the current framework (Angus Reid 2023).

*“A catastrophic loss of advertising to social media giants has made it more challenging for private news organizations.”*

The CBC is the largest player in the anglophone news market (Brin and Charlton 2024). No sensible strategy for any industry would involve the government subsidizing one participant in the market – let alone the largest – at the expense of private competitors. Private sector news organizations have been making this case for many years. A catastrophic loss of advertising to social media giants has made it more challenging for private news organizations to compete against the massively subsidized CBC. Meanwhile, the CBC’s efforts to expand into online journalism has further steamrolled legacy and green shoot online media who are struggling to build sustainable business models through subscriptions.

Canadians are shifting the way they consume news and information. For instance, almost half of “television” viewing now occurs via streaming (Hudes

2024). Music streamers such as Apple Music and Spotify have largely made traditional radio stations obsolete. Meanwhile, talk radio – the heart and soul of public radio – is being supplanted by podcasts.

The CRTC’s 2022–23 monitoring report shows clear trends towards online consumption (Guttmann 2024) while cable and over-the-air consumption is in decline. The loss of advertising to online platforms, from Craigslist to Facebook, continues unabated.

In the face of such upheaval, many news organizations around the world have sought to monetize their online viewership through subscriptions or other means. International examples include the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, CNN online, *Daily Telegraph*, *Times of London*, and *Washington Post*, all of which exist without benefit of government subsidies. Others, such as *The Guardian*, solicit voluntary donations, apparently with some success (GNM Press Office 2024). In Canada, the *Globe and Mail* has, according to testimony given by its publisher to the Senate Transportation and Communications Committee, successfully adjusted its business model from a 70/30 advertising to subscription split to the reverse (TRCM Standing Committee 2023). Brian Myles, publisher of *Le Devoir*, testified before the same committee that two-thirds of his newspaper’s revenue is achieved through subscriptions.

This indicates that if consumers think news content is worth it, they’re willing to pay. However, CBC’s dominant subsidized position makes “paying for private news” far less likely.

While the CBC points to studies showing that, in general, Canadians would like it to continue to play a role (*Centre for Media, Technology, and Democracy* 2024), critics point to the corporation’s poor TV ratings for its English service as evidence that support is only theoretical (*Globe and Mail* 2023).

Further complicating the issue, in recent years the CBC has been rated as left of centre by independent media bias sites (Allsides 2025; Media Bias/Fact Check 2024). A recent study by University of Guelph Political Scientist and MLI Senior Fellow Dave Snow showed strong evidence of bias.”

Some might argue that the CBC is merely reflecting the views of the majority of Canadians, who polls suggest hold centrist or centre-left political views. That argument does little to console the significant number of Canadian taxpayers who identify as politically centre-right or right. And certainly centre-left Canadians would likely decry a revamped “right-wing” CBC.

Being all things to everyone may well be an impossible and unnecessary task. The answer is to focus on facts – first and foremost – while maintaining journalistic objectivity and presenting multiple and diverse viewpoints that represent the broad swath of Canadians.

*Summary:*

- Policy-makers must recognize that the English language market in Canada is distinct and develop policies accordingly.
- The market is undergoing a period of massive disruption as consumers move from print, cable/satellite, and over-the-air delivery and consumption to audio and video streaming services (Hudes 2024). This transition requires investment, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- Subsidizing struggling business models suppresses innovation in the industry (Rugy 2015).
- Evidence indicates that subscriptions and donations can be valuable sources of revenue for news organizations (Statista 2019).
- The CBC has successfully attracted online readers by offering news for free.
- The CBC’s local radio services, which are free, have built up audiences that make them frequent leaders in those markets.
- The CBC’s English-language television services, both the main over the air service and the cable-only news service, have failed to attract audiences.
- A modern national news industry policy must prioritize sustaining trust in the news produced by journalists and therefore not involve direct subsidization of media.

*Recommendations:*

- All public operating subsidies must be phased out. This includes the CBC’s English-language operations. This phase-out should take place over 24 months.
- CBC English should, during this period of transition, focus its resources on providing news and current affairs programming through its online platform in text, audio, and video streaming.
- The assets of CBC English should be transitioned into a new corporation focused on the online delivery of audio, video, and text

news content supported through subscriptions and sponsorships. As previously stated, the CBC currently spends approximately \$284 million on news, analysis/interpretation, long-form documentary, and other information. If 10 per cent of Canada's 15 million households were to purchase a \$30/month subscription – less than the current cost of a *Globe and Mail* subscription, it would have revenue of \$540 million.

- On that basis, or any other proposed and approved, the corporation should then be offered for purchase to a buyer consistent with Canada's competition laws.
- The government, recognizing the public good inherent in supporting trusted news sources, should implement policies allowing citizens to claim the cost of news subscriptions as a tax deduction against their income. This should be implemented over a period of five years beginning with 100 per cent deductible up to a maximum of \$1,000 in the first year, declining by six per cent annually before being fixed at 70 per cent and a maximum \$700 reduction in income tax payable.

## Implementation

Establishing a national news industry policy that reflects the distinct needs of Canada's language markets and the unique circumstances of the sparsely populated, resource-rich (and sovereignty-threatened) North will not be uncomplicated. But it is achievable. Here are a few high-level suggestions for achieving such a reorganization:

- CBC North and Radio-Canada should remain within a single government-funded corporation.
- It should provide news and entertainment programming much as it does today with a focus on transitioning, outside of Quebec and New Brunswick, to digital-only delivery of those services.
- That organization should develop a business plan that involves, in addition to subsidy, an efficient and focused service that earns

revenue through donations, subscriptions for enhanced services, sponsorship, and advertising.

- All French text content should be made available with an online translation tool allowing anglophones to read and understand the news, which should be distinctly Canadian, reflect all regions of the country, and promote national unity and understanding.
- A new corporation, perhaps with a working title “Canadian News Corporation” – entirely independent from government and free of mandate obligations – should be formed from the assets of CBC English and as previously described, reorganized and sold.

## Conclusion

The future of the CBC, which exists as a blend of news and entertainment can most efficiently be dealt with by breaking it down into digestible portions. This paper has set aside the cultural component for future analysis and deals only with the CBC as a provider of news. That, in turn, cannot be dealt with in isolation. Its future must be considered within the framework of national news industry policy designed to ensure citizens are provided with shared sets of facts that they can trust.

We must also consider that the CBC does not have a single audience. Rather, there are three distinct markets: The North, francophone Canada, and anglophone Canada.

For civic, sovereignty and security reasons, CBC North should continue to be publicly funded to serve citizens of the North until it develops into a market capable of providing sufficient consumer-based support for news organizations. It should offer objective news coverage and programming and continue its evolution into an audio and visual streaming service.

As for Radio-Canada, public funding should continue at least until a thorough analysis of the francophone news market is conducted. A taxpayer-subsidized Radio-Canada should strive to serve a national francophone audience, not just cater to Quebecers, and also promote Canadian unity in its coverage and programming.

The case of English CBC is very different. The CBC's public funding grossly distorts the English-language news media market, creating an unfair playing field and stifling growth and innovation by private media. This, in turn, is forcing private media to also ask for subsidies as their advertising dollars dissipate (shifting largely to large social media corporations such as Meta and Google). The increase in government funding for news media has caused a corresponding decrease in public trust in Canadian journalism.

Direct subsidies for English language media, including CBC, should end, replaced by consumption incentives such as tax write-offs for Canadian news media subscriptions. At the same time, the more focused CBC should be transitioned into a new company financed through donations and subscriptions in a direct transactional relationship between the corporation and the citizens it seeks to serve.

This proposal presents a bold opportunity to free the CBC from government reliance and create a media model driven by the people it serves. A subscription-based system would not only provide financial independence but also establish a direct, accountable relationship between the CBC and Canadians. Ultimately, this approach would promote healthier competition within the media landscape, encouraging innovation and providing a stronger, more dynamic Canadian media ecosystem. [MLI](#)



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## Endnotes

- 1 In 2024 the Macdonald-Laurier Institute released *The Ottawa Declaration on Canadian Journalism* calling on the media industry to reject government payroll subsidies. For a list of signatories see: <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/the-ottawa-declaration-on-canadian-journalism/>.



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