

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It was not without apprehension that I accepted to chair CBC | Radio-Canada's Board of Directors. The responsibility of leading the Board of one of the country's largest cultural institutions simply seemed beyond my capabilities. Yet, since October 2005, I have been settling into my duties.

CBC | Radio-Canada has played a defining role in my professional life. I began my career as a journalist here in 1958, and went on to pursue another career as a writer. I freelanced exclusively for CBC | Radio-Canada until 1980, when I took up hosting and writing duties in private television, and then became a broadcaster when I launched a second private French-language television network. This lengthy foray into the private sector helped me understand CBC | Radio-Canada's vital leadership role in setting benchmarks for quality that have kept Canadian radio and television at the top of the game.



For instance, thanks to Télévision de Radio-Canada, we were able to begin talking about culture in Québec. It was neither American nor French, but French-speaking North American. It could ensure the cultural survival of French speakers in and outside Québec, for whom French-language television and radio were, and still are, a daily staple. In French-speaking Canada, television was the catalyst for a social and cultural explosion, the preferred – often sole – means of expression for our artists and writers, and the spark that ignited cultural self-fulfilment.

By reflecting our diversity, celebrating our achievements, and constantly asking questions, CBC | Radio-Canada has helped shape our country, building bridges between the regions and communities much like the railway did over a century ago.

Today, CBC | Radio-Canada is at a crucial juncture. Canada's audiovisual landscape has greatly changed, and many more changes loom on the horizon for the coming years. Canada has also changed. Its demographics have shifted, along with its centres of gravity and decision-making. The West has become just as important as Ontario and Québec. Alberta's gas and oil riches, coupled with emerging trade opportunities in Asia, will only strengthen this trend.

Our primary challenge lies in reflecting this new reality, and we must rise to it if we want to remain relevant. Through its News, Current Affairs and entertainment programming, CBC | Radio-Canada must ensure that all Canadians find a place in society, while living their lives well-informed and in a spirit of cooperation. CBC | Radio-Canada must also help develop social cohesion so that our minority and majority groups can join forces to secure social and economic progress for Canada.

The time is particularly ripe, therefore, to reflect on the public broadcaster's role and mandate. Do we want a healthy Canadian culture on our airwaves? Do we want to preserve a broadcasting space for our own voices and ideas where we can showcase our homegrown talent and individuality, and where we can continue helping to write the great Canadian story every day?

CBC | Radio-Canada has been driving our culture and striking a balance between the country's varied interests since 1936. Far from waning, I believe our role is growing more important with each passing day. Because the country is becoming more complex, it is more difficult to find solutions for the issues we face, and the proliferation of communications and information platforms only reaffirms the need for a coherent, responsible public broadcaster that values integrity.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank all members of CBC | Radio-Canada's Board of Directors. Each has made invaluable contributions throughout the year, and I know that our public broadcaster and Senior Management can rely on each of them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Fournier', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

GUY FOURNIER
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS