



November 14, 2007

Noreen Golfman  
Chair, Steering Committee  
Friends of Canadian Broadcasting  
Sent by email: [ngolfman@mum.ca](mailto:ngolfman@mum.ca)

Dear Ms. Golfman,

One might reasonably expect Friends of Canadian Broadcasting (FCB) to share the values that make the national public broadcaster what it is: serving the public; rigorously fair and impartial information; and maintaining independence from Government are all central to how CBC/Radio-Canada operates on behalf of Canadians. FCB's potential supporters would be well served by a fair and accurate representation of the facts surrounding Hubert T. Lacroix's appointment as President and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada. Instead, Mr. Morrison's most recent fundraising letter seems to be intent on attacking Mr. Lacroix's reputation before he has even begun his mandate.

The letter, which I attach for ease of reference, states that public broadcasting is at risk because of the appointment of Hubert T. Lacroix as President and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada, suggesting he is a secret agent for the Government's hidden agenda to do harm to the Corporation. Mr. Morrison cites as evidence a contribution to a local Conservative candidate and an absence of experience in running a media company. He carefully neglects to note that Mr. Lacroix has also given contributions to local candidates of other parties. Nor does he mention that in the five years that Mr. Lacroix was Chair of Télémedia (two as Chair and three as Executive Chair), they grew the broadcasting business from 22 radio stations to 80 stations. Mr. Lacroix was brought in to help that growth.

Mr. Morrison implies an affiliation between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Hubert T. Lacroix that simply does not exist. Mr. Lacroix has stated publicly that he did not meet Mr. Harper, nor have the two ever spoken on the telephone. Indeed, Mr. Lacroix has been in the same room with Mr. Harper only once in his life, at a public dinner many years ago. They do not know each other. To insinuate otherwise is a flagrant distortion of fact and to hint that the two are co-conspirators with some "hidden agenda" for public broadcasting is malicious fantasy that is based on nothing but the fundraising needs of FCB.

It's no secret that FCB advocates for CBC/Radio-Canada's Board of Directors having the responsibility of hiring and firing its Chief Executive Officer. It is a valid position with which I take no issue. However, to ignore the fact that the selection of Hubert T. Lacroix was accomplished by way of the most open and professional process in the history of governance of CBC/Radio-Canada is peculiarly expedient. It's especially disconcerting considering that

Mr. Morrison had the following to say to Playback when the recruitment process was launched: “I’m thoroughly impressed with the way the Government is handling the appointment process. It is a step in the right direction.”

That process ran its course without diversion. The selection committee was comprised of a number of stakeholders and included the full and direct involvement of Timothy W. Casgrain, Chair of CBC/Radio-Canada’s Board of Directors. In fact, Mr. Casgrain chaired the selection committee. This is a first, and it is certainly in keeping with FCB’s desire to see involvement from the Board in the appointment process. The committee’s unanimous recommendation to appoint Hubert T. Lacroix was subsequently endorsed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Prime Minister’s office. It’s worth reiterating that Mr. Lacroix and Mr. Harper never had any contact. Nor did Mr. Lacroix meet with Josée Verner, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, during the process; the only contact between the two was a phone call prior to the Minister’s announcement of his appointment.

Mr. Lacroix has stated unambiguously that his mandate is clear: to ensure that the public broadcaster fulfils its full and undiminished role in the country as set out in the *Broadcasting Act*. And he has stated publicly that he would not have accepted the job otherwise.

Having said all this, I recognize that Friends of Canadian Broadcasting needs to raise money to survive, and creating a frightening picture may be an effective ploy. FCB holds CBC/Radio-Canada to a high standard. It should be willing to measure itself by that same standard. It is Mr. Morrison’s self-appointed role to cry wolf whenever change is implemented at CBC/Radio-Canada. Our world is changing fast enough that there is, and will continue to be, lots for him to howl about without resorting to impugning the reputation of people he has never met.

Hubert T. Lacroix is set to take the reins of the national public broadcaster in January 2008. Since you are associated with the governance of Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, I would ask you again to consider whether *ad hominem* attacks of this kind – which are based in overstatement and conjecture, and that soil the reputation of individuals as opposed to promoting healthy dialogue on issues of relevance – advance the cause of public broadcasting. Would it not be more productive and responsible to take the measure of the man once he has taken up his post and judge him by his actions? Or is this just about opportunistic fundraising?

Sincerely,



William B. Chambers  
Vice-President, Communications  
CBC/Radio-Canada

cc : Ian Morrison, Spokesperson, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting