

2015 Election – Your Views on CBC

Questions

Q1. The federal government has taken control of the wages and working conditions of all CBC employees, including those who cover the news.

New powers contained in the Omnibus Budget Implementation Bill C-60 that became law in June 2013 conflict with provisions of the Broadcasting Act that guarantee CBC's independence from government interference. Many, [including some of Canada's most eminent journalistic authorities](#) are concerned that these new government powers interfere with the CBC's editorial independence and could turn the national public broadcaster into a government propaganda machine.

If elected, will you work to repeal the provisions of Bill C-60 that undermine the CBC's independence?

Q2. On May 3, 2011, the day after Canada's last general election, James Moore, then Minister of Canadian Heritage, speaking for the Conservative government, stated:

"We believe in the national public broadcaster. We have said that we will maintain or increase support for the CBC. That is our platform and we have said that before and we will commit to that."

But in the next Budget, the Conservative government reduced CBC's funding by \$115 per annum, forcing the CBC to cut 1,500 of its creative staff and to behave more like a private broadcaster, becoming even more commercial. For example, the CBC has placed ads on Radio Two, ending almost 40 years of commercial-free service.

Unlike many other public broadcasters around the world, the CBC has been starved of funds. Only four of 26 western democracies spend less than Canada on public broadcasting¹ — Portugal, Poland, New Zealand and the United States.

¹ As a percentage of GDP.

On average government funding of public broadcasters in western democracies is \$80 per capita per year.

A few years ago, the House of Commons Heritage Committee recommended that CBC/Radio Canada's core funding be increased to an amount equivalent to at least half of what most western democracies invest in public broadcasting.

This recommendation would provide CBC with a least \$350 million in additional funds each year and thereby offer the Corporation an alternative to excessive dependency on advertising.

This increase would amount to less than 3¢ a day for each Canadian.

Do you think CBC is worth this investment and would you, if elected, advocate in favour of increasing Canada's investment in public broadcasting to at least half of the average in western democracies?

Q.3 Positions on CBC's Board, including its President, are currently Prime Ministerial patronage appointments. The Commons Heritage Committee has recommended reforming this practice so that CBC's Board is appointed at arm's-length from patronage to include the best and brightest Canadians, and that this Board, not the Prime Minister, should have the power to hire and fire CBC's President.

Should the practice of political patronage appointments to CBC's Board be ended and should the Board be given responsibility to hire and fire CBC's President?