

March 10 Rebuttal to CBC re: Michel Doucet's request for more moderation.

## Description

March 10, 2016

Mr. Brodie Fenlon

Director of digital media, CBC

It has come to our attention that there has been a recent letter of complaint filed by Mr. Michel Doucet on behalf of Francophone individuals and organizations requesting that CBC better control the comments made in public forums that are disturbing to the Francophone population.

May we point out that Freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication, are a Fundamental Freedom under Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Having reviewed three published accounts of the complaint, as well as having viewed the forums in question on numerous occasions – I'm afraid that we are hard-pressed to find comments that would meet the definition of hate propaganda or incitement. While it may be true that some comments are distasteful – they are not criminal and are in fact a protected freedom.

The complaint being made is that the CBC must better moderate its forums – however it has been our experience that these forums are in fact quite well moderated, and we have seen many posts removed, and many being denied. The ability exists on these forums to “flag” or “report” a post for review and possible removal, and we consider this to be a reasonable safeguard that is commonly used.

With regards to the requirement that individuals post only under their true identity – this poses some problems for those individuals, both French, and English, who have been browbeaten, threatened, and intimidated into fear of job loss should they be found speaking out. We have seen this firsthand in the published and acknowledged actions against Horizon Health employees who were given verbal warnings after speaking out about the French Café at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital. While a retraction was issued once this matter became public – the fear of retaliation remains a reality for many. Your current system already requires that an existing email address or Facebook profile be used to log-in and access the ability to comment in these forums.

We would suggest that we have seen no such concerns regarding hateful or inappropriate comments raised by Mr. Doucet and his associates about comments made in other forums. Several regarding refugees, for example, contained some of the most hurtful and obnoxious commentary seen yet. Mr. Doucet's concern seems to apply only to comments he feels are disrespectful to the Francophone population. We would like to think that a man of his position, both Professor and Attorney, might be

expected to recognize the rights of others, no matter how distasteful to him personally. We might also suggest that Mr. Doucet should be educated sufficiently to recognize the difference between hate speech, and simple frustration, anger, and dissatisfaction.

We would also strongly suggest that Mr. Doucet, as well as others reported to have signed his complaint review their own social media activity and public communications before suggesting that the comments of others are to be considered hateful or inciteful.

The bottom line is that we feel CBC has sufficient and reasonable guards in place to moderate and control commentary. We ask that our Rights be respected as well and that CBC does not give in to efforts to silence an individual's right to speak their thoughts.

Sharon Buchanan

On behalf of,

Anglophone Rights Association of

New Brunswick

Claire Dykeman

On behalf of

Citizens Action Team (C.A.T. NB)

(Unregistered)

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