

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

SUGGESTED NEW LEGISLATION

Mr. Édouard Desrosiers (Hochelaga-Maisonneuve) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation to:

- (1) dissolve the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and establish a new broadcasting corporation devoted to Canada's cultural development;
- (2) terminate the present mandate of all members of the Corporation's Board of Directors and its offices abroad, including the management of CBC International; and
- (3) provide for a mechanism for replacing the new corporation's management, including the ratification of their appointment by a Parliamentary committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, only a few years ago, the Government was urging the CBC to "build the future", to pave the way to a distinct society, and it defined its philosophy as follows: to act now.

First, ensure that our broadcasting system supports our social and cultural orientations, recalling our commitment to the objectives defined in the Broadcasting Act in 1968.

Second, offer all Canadians a substantial number of attractive Canadian programs in all programming categories, while promoting the development of our broadcasting and visual production industries.

Third, to provide for diversified and expanded programming in both official languages and in all regions of Canada. The Government even suggested a thorough study. What has happened since then?

Mr. Speaker, using as an excuse the much needed budgetary cutbacks of \$75 million, last November CBC administrators decided to create an uproar among the Canadian public. That is the way it is perceived by many Canadians. I have been receiving many letters and documents as well as telephone calls to this effect, and my colleagues as well. We have learned some troubling facts, and they should be taken seriously. We are a responsible Government that will not bow to threats or blackmail or let itself be influenced by undemocratic activities as low and unconscionable as those I am going to discuss with you now.

To raise a surge of protest among the Canadian public, the CBC has gone so far as to flout elementary decency and deprive Canadians in various regions across this country of a service to which they are entitled. Always claiming the pressure of budgetary restrictions instead of putting a stop to its own profligate spending, the CBC has cut what are commonly referred to as the antennae that relay programs from the stations to Canadian viewers and listeners. This is despicable, Mr. Speaker.

Under the same false pretences, the Corporation has cut popular programs to shock and win over public opinion. It asks the average employee to resign so that it can maintain the jobs

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of friends who have long outlived their usefulness and to maintain jobs that themselves have become useless.

During this period of austerity, at a time when it is supposedly lacking in funds, the CBC is still publishing a kind of weekly that is sent from coast to coast across this country. In addition, just when the Government wants the CBC to cut expenditures, the corporation buys full-page ads in newspapers throughout Canada. How much does that cost, Mr. Speaker? No wonder people are asking questions.

Here is another example of outright waste of money, Mr. Speaker. Recently the management of engineering on Montreal's Côte de Liesse practically turned the place upside down—nothing new for them, but quite unacceptable to us. More than half of the 300 employees were moved from the second to the third floor, and vice versa. Some of those people have been uprooted anywhere from seven to twenty times over the years. The entire telephone system has to be changed, which entails more unnecessary expenses for such things as printing new business cards, cardex files and telephone directories. They change carpets, paint, move walls, doors and furniture. I suspect the scenario is the same in other buildings across Canada, Mr. Speaker. Yet, long-time employees will tell you that they still do not know why. They are simply told that the money has to be spent before the end of the fiscal year. How much does all that cost, year in and year out? The question is relevant indeed. Still in that same building, there are at least seven directors, or engineers, or senior architects, or supervisors—unilingual anglophones, all of them. So they were given seven francophone assistants to answer the phone.

● (1610)

Mr. Speaker, did you know that some of the program managers in Montreal graciously invite relatives or friends of their guest artists to go along when they travel outside for live shows or to tape certain programs? Did you know that the production and support crew are forced to stay at the hotel of friends? During that time, low-paid employees are laid off, supposedly owing to budget cutbacks imposed by the Government. Elsewhere, other employees must be kept silent, so they are appointed assistants to the director, no less. How much does that cost Canadian taxpayers who are deprived of certain programs?

You may have noticed that I spared you much of the figures in dollars and cents, but quite soon we will call in some people and unveil for everyone to see the scandalous outlays at the CBC. If you knew how much certain artists among the friends of the CBC are paid, Mr. Speaker, you would be sick. And what about the close pals of management who get the cushy jobs? Those people like to move around, so they attend various cultural or cinema festivals on company time, they travel throughout the world, bragging about our culture and our visual cultural products. After spending tens of thousands of dollars of the Canadian taxpayers, they always come back