

identity and cultural sovereignty, regardless of the broadcasting method used.

This clause further says that the Canadian broadcasting system should safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic structure of Canada.

[English]

Second, in defining terms such as broadcasting the bill focuses on the activities of creating, presenting and distributing broadcast programs without tying these activities to a specific distribution technology. In this sense, the bill has been called technology neutral.

This marks a fundamental shift in the government's approach to broadcasting legislation. It is an approach that will allow the legislation to maintain its legal authority over all aspects of broadcasting in the face of future technological development and is therefore critical to our over-all strategy.

Third, the bill clarifies the roles of all the players in the broadcasting system, both private and public, and their responsibilities toward Canadian broadcasting policy.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is vital in this enterprise. The bill makes it clear that the CBC will remain the principal vehicle for cultural expression in Canada. It will continue to serve Canadians by providing a distinctly Canadian viewpoint and a broad range of programming including news, variety, drama and sports. The mandate of the CBC, as contained in this bill, expects that the corporation will continue to lead in providing authentically Canadian choices, particularly in popular drama, in both official languages.

But the bill also recognizes that the responsibility for Canadian programs is not that of the CBC alone. For the first time the bill attributes to private broadcasters specific responsibilities for the creation and presentation of Canadian programs. This is an important change. It recognizes the contribution that the private sector has made and should continue to make towards national broadcasting policy.

The bill also recognizes the unique contribution which cable and other distribution services are making to Canadian broadcasting. In defining a role for these services the bill acknowledges that they can and should, where appropriate, contribute to Canadian programming. For this reason, the bill provides the CRTC with the power to mediate disputes between broadcasters and

cable distributors so that conflicts can be resolved in the public interest.

[Translation]

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in order to increase the diversity of programs available to Canadians, the Bill also provides for the creation of complementary broadcasting services to meet the needs which are not now being met by broadcasters of mass-audience entertainment programs.

[English]

The final point that I would wish to make is that this bill before us today is about to lead us to an assertion of Canadian consciousness and to Canadian identity. I submit the nub of the debate, once we get it into committee will be as to whether or not Canadian consciousness and Canadian identity must be the forerunner of what we all believe to be a desirable objective of our country, particularly at this time the objective of national unity. For, indeed, without a consciousness, without the reinforcement of that Canadian essence, unity will not come about.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the chief government whip on a point of order.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations with representatives of the parties and I think you would find that there is unanimous consent to revert to Routine Proceedings for the purpose of presenting the twentieth and twenty-first reports of the striking committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

STRIKING COMMITTEE

TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the twentieth and twenty-first reports of the Striking Committee. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the twenty-first report later. I would ask that we dispense with the reading of that report by the clerk at the table as that report concerns only membership changes to committees.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.]