

Government Orders

[*English*]

This medium, that is television, radio and others, can in fact contribute to not only the appreciation of the different languages used in this country, but as well to the learning of those particular languages.

[*Translation*]

Cultural education is another role. We do not always have a very clear understanding of the meaning of the word "culture". To many people, it means the clothes people wear and the holidays they celebrate throughout the year. It goes deeper than that, and there is a real dilemma because we have not tried to go further and understand more about this. To me, culture is not just what I wear, what I eat or the holidays I celebrate. It is the way I look at the world, receive and interpret information, and try to solve problems.

Providing cultural education is so important because it means explaining to people what culture is and what impact it has, and how one culture's perception of a given problem differs from that of another culture.

[*English*]

Regional concerns are another wonderful opportunity for broadcasting. We know that we have a wonderful country. It is not one of the most wonderful—it is the most wonderful. We need only consider the small province of Prince Edward Island with roughly 120,000 people; the giant province of Ontario with over 9.5 million people; and the Northwest Territories with one-third of Canada's land mass and a little over 50,000 inhabitants.

We have in the western Arctic roughly seven native languages that are being used on a daily basis without a whole lot of friction. We have special problems in each of those regions. The smallness of P.E.I. makes it unique and wonderful in a number of ways, but it creates certain unique problems as well. With the largeness of Ontario and its uniqueness, the distinctiveness, if I may say, of Quebec and the Yukon, there are special and unique concerns.

It seems to me that broadcasting could play a greater role than it now plays in helping us understand those regions, in helping us to understand the problems that

exist in our cities with our rates of crime, alcoholism and abuses of different kinds. Surely these are regional concerns, but they are real. They include the problems of our rural population, the depopulation of the rural areas, the farming problem, those tremendous difficulties that have to be surmounted on a regular basis.

Distance education for remote areas is another golden opportunity. What about providing learning opportunities for men and women who do not have flexible schedules for a number of reasons, be it because of work, family responsibilities or what have you?

As well, I would like to see the consideration of continuing education, including literacy. All of us know that we must keep learning continually on a regular basis in order to be able to contribute to society as we would want to. Many of us know that there are roughly 5 million Canadians in Canada today who are considered functionally illiterate. It is not a disease. It simply suggests that they do not have the literacy and the numeracy skills that will permit them to develop their full potential. This costs Canada roughly \$10 billion a year. What better opportunity is there to try to reach those particular individuals to give them the kind of confidence they need and want in order to participate fully in Canadian life?

[*Translation*]

It seems to me there is another objective that is very useful and extremely important, and that is to explain government to Canadians, and I am talking about federal, provincial and municipal governments.

It is often said that today's young people do not understand politics and are not terribly interested in the subject. This is only partly true. We must also recognize the fact that among young people today, and I believe this very strongly, there is as much, if not more, knowledge about the political process at various levels of government as there is among adults. I believe that we have a democracy which has certain great strengths and certain weaknesses but is not as well known as it should be to each and every citizen across Canada.

We could consider another extremely important objective: the impact of our domestic economy on social programs. Let me give a few examples.