

*Government Orders*

One of these has been identified by the Canadian Conference of the Arts, which acts as a voice on cultural issues for over 200,000 Canadian artists and cultural supports. It cites clause 2(e) with its rather cryptic reference to the importance that artists be compensated for the public lending of their work.

This is an issue which is extremely important to artists. They are given short shift because there is no place in the legislation that will give force to this identified right. Unless there is provision to ensure the appropriate compensation for the public showing of art, it should be deleted.

There is no use having something in the bill that means nothing. We will be struggling to ensure that clause 2(e) is given legislative force to ensure its implementation. It is especially important for writers, visual artists and others who will not belong to a collective bargaining unit.

Passage of Bill C-7 with an appropriate amendment in this regard will certainly be seen as a real benefit to artists.

Clause 22(2) of the bill also creates a problem for Canadian artists. It restricts cultural labour organizations from taking action against non-members.

The intention of this is to ensure that there will not be a closed shop approach to the cultural labour market. In fact, what it does is prevent cultural labour organizations from taking any measures to protect jobs in Canada from foreign workers in a situation where there is not corresponding access to the market in the country from which those artists might have come.

The artists want this clause of the bill amended to allow protective measures to be taken against foreign artists where there are no reciprocal agreements in existence. The provision should be completely removed.

We would also like, along with the artistic community, to see amendments to Part II, clause 8(3), of the bill accepted. The bill in this regard defines artists as independent contractors or free lancers but gives the Canada Labour Relations Board the power to decide which artists are deemed to be employees for the purpose of labour relations. These artists so deemed would not be covered under the Status of the Artists Act.

This means that those artists could be subject to rules which are inappropriate to the arts, the inappropriateness of which has been recognized by the creation of the new tribunal. Therefore, the members of the artistic community would like to see an amendment to the bill that would allow the tribunal provided for in the bill to make its own determination and have equal footing with the Canada Labour Relations Board in that respect.

As it now stands the act would give precedence to the CLRB instead of the tribunal. The Alliance for Canadian Television, Cinema and Radio Artists which represents 10,000 professional performers, writers and broadcast journalists working in Canada put forth recommendations for a compromise which calls for the institution of an appeal process. Second, it calls for the amendment of the wording to state: "Unless such persons shall be independent contractors at common law". This would be added to clause 8(3)(a) and (b).

The New Democratic Party supports recommendations for these amendments. There are some others which need not be detailed here.

The bill does not address some of the issues concerning taxation in respect of which artists have called for reform. They want to see additional personal exemptions for employed artists. They want to see the establishment of a social benefit scheme for artists. They want a dual status for artists: freelance for the purpose of the income tax and copyright and employee for the purpose of social benefit. They want to see bankruptcy provisions and income averaging. These issues should be pursued with alacrity.

• (1820)

We have always as a party advocated a comprehensive review of the tax system, not only to provide fairness for artists but fairness for all Canadians. What the artists seek is appropriately a part of that kind of reform.

The bill, as we said, initially is welcome. It is long past due. It is of paramount importance. The artistic community wants it and they need it. The country needs it particularly at this time.

We look forward as a party to making appropriate contributions to strengthen the legislation so that full satisfaction will be given to those needs.