

ant expressions in so-called English Canada *vis-a-vis* Quebec. That does not make me very happy as a Canadian.

• (1300)

I believe national unity is very important and deletion of a specific reference to the development of national unity from the CBC's mandate is therefore of very great concern to me. The major function of the CBC in times when the country is divided over issues such as Meech Lake and free trade must be to foster national unity. So I suggest that we address ourselves to this particular weakness in the bill and I would hope we will spend a considerable time on that aspect when the bill reaches committee.

I want to refer to the CBC in somewhat greater detail. I was delighted, as I think most Canadians were, when I heard that Patrick Watson was appointed chairman of the CBC, a new position for the CBC. I think Mr. Watson is a great broadcaster. He belongs to the CBC family. I was once a member of the CBC family. He is a child of the corporation. He understands it, and I think that augurs well for public broadcasting in this country. I can tell you that when his appointment was announced it worked as a morale booster for the staff of the CBC. I think he is going to do a good job.

It bewilders me, however, that he was appointed as a part-time chairman. Here we have this man whom I could describe as a national treasure with respect to broadcasting, and we appoint him as a part-time chairman. Why? If we have this resource, why do we squander it? If he is worth half-time, I would suggest he is worth full-time. I think it was a serious mistake to appoint Mr. Watson only on a part-time basis.

There is another aspect of this which concerns me and it has to do with an appointment for only five years. As you know, up until now the president of the corporation has been appointed to seven-year terms, not five. Now, under this act, the government is proposing five years. I find that somewhat disturbing because I think it is better to have what I might call an overlap from one administration to another or from one Parliament to another. To me there is too much convenience in having a five-year term. It sort of fits with the life of a Parliament. I think that we may have changes from one government to another or from one Parliament to another and I believe

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that an overlap would work much better. That is something else that we are going to have to look at very closely when this bill gets to committee.

The state of the CBC is not good and has not been for a number of years. It is in a real financial bind. It has the enormous job of fostering national unity and promoting our identity. Yet, it does not have the resources to do that.

Telling the story of Canada is not easy for anyone. It is not easy for the CBC because in that mandate the CBC has to reflect Canadians to Canadians. The CBC cannot just be satisfied, in my opinion, with doing what it is doing now, it has to do more. It has to present more drama, for example. There are limitations on journalism. I think the CBC does a pretty good job of journalism, but there are limitations to it. I think if you truly want to get the Canadian story across, truly reflect one region to another, you have to spend more money and devote more resources to drama. That is how you get to the guts of Canadians. You get to their insides through drama. Journalism can do only so much.

I know that the CBC is working on a plan to wrestle with some of these problems but there is still concern that when it is all said and done, when the re-organization is completed, the CBC will still face a serious financial shortfall. As I understand it, the CBC is working on a plan to change the face of the CBC in two or three years, particularly for those who are working there. Hopefully there will not be any serious program cuts in the next two or three years.

As I understand it, when all is said and done, even after all the organization is completed, the CBC will still be facing a financial shortfall of perhaps as much as \$100 million. Certainly as much as \$50 million. That is disturbing. The government is going to have to come to grips with that. There is a point when the government is going to have to say: "Is the CBC worth what it is? Has the CBC done its job in trimming fat and that kind of thing?" And if so it is going to have to come up with the cash. I feel the day is going to come when the government is going to have to support the CBC. If I am right in believing that the corporation is as important as an institution as is this place and as is the Supreme Court, then we have got to fund it and we have got to fund it properly.