

*Government Orders*

makes me shudder. I wonder how much longer we will survive as a people and as a nation with a distinct culture in North America.

In general, when we talk about cultural survival, we think automatically of this country's francophones. In fact, French Canadians and especially Quebecers have developed such energy, such cultural self-sufficiency that they are now better equipped than anglophones to face up to the cultural invasion we are experiencing.

Living in isolation on this continent as a result of their language, Canada's francophones have developed creative and other skills in producing their own songs, soap operas, literature and magazines. In short, there undoubtedly exists on this continent a distinct French culture which is neither a by-product nor an imitation of the French culture in Europe and elsewhere.

[English]

I recognize that there is still a need for financial balancing in Radio-Canada, CBC, and I think that with the enunciations in the new bill we can accomplish the equivalence that has been alluded to.

[Translation]

However, the situation is different in English Canada. Culturally, Canada is being invaded, dominated, and occupied by the States. Eighty per cent of our books, 71 per cent of our television programs, and 85 per cent of our records come from foreign countries. They are almost exclusively made in USA.

In the last two decades, Canada has become a leader in the development of telecommunications technologies. We are proud, in fact very proud of our success in that field, and we intend to increase our efforts and do even better.

Unfortunately, progress has been slow in the production area. Technically, we can say we are leaders in development, but culturally, we tag behind.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in Canadian identity. I believe that the links established between Western and Eastern Canada by our predecessors were and still are essential for us to be able to communicate. In learning about each other, Canadians can better understand who they are, they can see how different and independent they are of Americans.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has often described in the most eloquent terms the distinctive characteristics of the Canadian nation. This country is the product of combined British and French traditions. Our Constitution is based on peace, order and good government. We are a people which operates on consensus, moderation and balance. If we have opted for a mixed economy, it is because we felt that it is more conducive to social justice than the strict interaction of the market forces.

In Canada, we respect our aboriginal people we cherish both our founding nations and we encourage them to build for the future. Far from forcing them to conform, we provide them with every opportunity to maintain their cultural identity and thereby contribute to the great Canadian cultural mosaic. The new arrivals are for Canada a source of real enrichment.

It is beyond question that the implementation of the Canada—United States Free Trade Agreement, plus the breaking up of our national infrastructures, plus the destruction of our regional development programs have severely weakened the East–West ties which existed ever since this country came into being, to replace them with increasingly subjugating North South ties.

As elected representatives of the Canadian people, our basic duty is to take all preventive and corrective measures which we feel are needed to ensure the survival and development of the Canadian identity, without which it would no longer be possible to differentiate between a Canadian and an American.

We should make a very special effort to ensure that our national broadcasting network fully plays the vital role in this offensive which is essential to develop our national identity.

Even if we could, we would not isolate our airwaves nor erect a barrier against satellite intrusion. We want to be open to the world. We want to be in tune with national events. We want to discover the universe and its inhabitants. Our approach to broadcasting, therefore, should be progressive, open, dynamic and profoundly Canadian. Generally speaking, this bill goes in the right direction, but I nevertheless urge the Government, and especially the Minister, to closely study the changes which I have suggested, for they could certainly re-inforce our collective cultural future.