

Government Orders

It is setting it up to look like another American station, or a Canadian private station. It is setting it up to privatize it, and we are going to lose one of the big parts.

An hon. member: They said that with PetroCan.

Mr. Waddell: I know they laughed and said that with PetroCan, and now they are going to privatize Petro-Canada.

This represents the commercialization of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The CBC is being asked to operate more and more like a commercial network.

I put a question at the licence renewal of the CBC to the CBC vice-president and to the standing committee in May. The CBC vice-president Michael McEwen said the following in answer to a question from me: "You are right. We are getting squeezed, and each year we have to factor in how we are going to do that."

This year, 1989-90, it lost a 1 per cent real cut across the radio system. It managed to sustain its activity for one more year. As the president, Mr. Veilleux said: "If we keep going, something is going to have to give." Then, Mr. Speaker, you talk about making decisions. "Do you change the nature of how you express all your services? Do you lose some service? Do you lop off an arm, rather than deleting the whole thing? These are the issues we are going to have to deal with if we keep heading down this road."

The Minister of Communications came before committee and actually said: "Maybe we will get rid of all the advertising revenue." People went pale around the room: \$330 million if we get rid of the CBC. The minister does not know what he is doing. This government does not know what it is doing with respect to the CBC.

At one moment, it is asking for more commercial revenue and the next moment, it thought: "Well, we will just give it up." It is not rational in dealing with it. It is inconsistent. I think it is time that the Minister of Communications was moved to another portfolio. This is very serious.

What is happening at the CBC is more re-runs, more American programs, abandonment of the goal of 95 per cent Canadian content and furthermore, more centralization in Toronto.

The parliamentary secretary can get up and quote capital budgets. The capital budget has gone up from \$93 million to \$113 million, but that capital budget is basically based in purchasing in Toronto, which is almost like a commercialization or a real estate project in Toronto if you like.

The CBC is becoming more Torontonian, because it has become more concentrated in Toronto. There are cut-backs in the regions. Again, that is taking the CBC away from its goal of national unity. You do not have to get up and put rhetoric in all this, you can put it right down to facts.

The cut-backs in operations, I set them up and I challenge the parliamentary secretary to rebut those figures. You can say how it has become more commercialized. There is more revenue from commercial revenues: from 20 to 28 per cent. I challenge him to rebut that.

Third, Mr. Speaker, you can see how it has been taken in from the regions and concentrated in the centre.

• (1230)

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the bill before the House, Bill C-40, the broadcasting bill.

More than 98 per cent of Canadians living in the north have access to the CBC Northern Service, covering more than 4 million square kilometres including Yukon, Northwest Territories, and northern Quebec. The northern population of about 100,000 includes Inuit, Indian, Dene Métis and non-native groups. Service is provided in seven different languages including Inuktitut, Dog Rib, Chippewan, Slavey, Whichen, Cree, and Nuvialik-tun.

As well the CBC Northern Service produces recordings of native singers and musicians. The total in the spring of 1989 were 42 recordings. This is an opportunity for people who have a specific ability in the arts to express it through this particular mechanism provided by CBC. It is one that is much valued and I think maximized to its most positive benefit for the people in the north and for Canada as an expression of Canadianism.

Communication and transportation are the two most critical services northerners depend on. People in the north depend on radio for vital information for their safety and in many cases for their survival. Whether people are on the land or in their camps or on the trap line or driving on a remote highway, they have a radio because they need to know the weather conditions, the