

highest levels of the CBC without, at the same time, dividing the corporation in two. The committees are intended to make positive contributions to the management and operation of the CBC. Their creation recognizes the reality that the English and French language services operate largely independent of each other, serving different audiences with different needs, which the board must take into account. At the same time, the bill permits cross-membership between these committees, which could foster a better understanding at the board level of the different characteristics of the CBC French and English services across Canada. They should lead to a greater exchange of information between the two services that now exist.

Under Bill C-40 there remains only one board of directors of the CBC, and Clause 45 gives the board full authority to ensure that the standing committees become positive rather than divisive elements. The chairperson and the president are to be members of both standing committees. All other members are appointed by the board, not by the government, and the committees would perform such duties as determined by the board as a whole. In short, the CBC has full leeway to experiment with the structure and the function of these committees until it is satisfied that they contribute to the fulfilment of the CBC's mandate in a positive and constructive manner.

For these reasons, honourable senators, I believe Bill C-40 should be adopted as it was presented to the Senate committee. I therefore urge honourable senators to give serious consideration to passing Bill C-40 as it stands.

Senator Frith: Bill C-40 is not before us. The report is before us.

Hon. John B. Stewart: I should like to ask Senator Atkins a question. As I understood the honourable senator, he said that he did not object to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation engaging in nation building, or words to that effect. He then said that the expression "national unity" created difficulties for the preservation of journalistic integrity.

My question relates to the meaning of certain expressions used in the bill. The bill in the form Senator Atkins prefers would require the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to contribute to shared national consciousness and identity. On the other hand, Senator Atkins would not have the corporation contribute to national unity. Could the honourable senator explain why "shared national identity" is less offensive than "national unity"? Is it not true that the expression "national unity" has come to be regarded as unacceptable in certain quarters and that the government is yielding to pressure from those quarters? If the second prong of my question is not accurate, will the honourable senator tell the house why contributing to "shared national identity" is better than contributing to "national unity". I should have thought that "identity", which indicates absolute sameness, would be more offensive to the government than "national unity."

Senator Atkins: Honourable senators, I believe in national unity, as, I am sure, does everyone in this house.

[Senator Atkins.]

Senator Stewart: We will be voting together then.

Senator Atkins: The fact of the matter is that your definition of "national unity" may not be mine. When a broadcaster is responsible to cover the issues in this country as a follower of public affairs, I would ask this question: Is it not fair that the CBC cover my definition of "national unity", yours or anyone else's, whether they are members of this house or of the public, in an objective and fair way? They are not there as propagandists; they are there to contribute, in my view, to the shared national consciousness and identity of this country.

● (1240)

Senator Frith: Surely there is more disagreement about the meaning of "identity" than there is about the meaning of "unity".

Senator Stewart: Surely Senator Atkins will agree that if there are differences of understanding about the meaning of the expression "national unity", the same differences would exist—and at an even higher degree—about the meaning of "national identity." And if we agree that "national unity" must be deleted because people differ, then it follows that the entire clause should be struck from the bill.

Senator Atkins: I suppose the other question, honourable senators, would be what definition the CBC has in relation to its view of national unity.

Senator Stewart: You make my point.

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham: I have a question for Senator Atkins related to clause 45, to which I spoke yesterday. I advocated the deletion of that particular clause because in my view it would further contribute to the division of the country and, indeed, to balkanization.

Towards the end of his remarks Senator Atkins said, if I heard him correctly, that the legislation permits cross-membership between the proposed English language broadcasting committee and the French language broadcasting committee. I cannot find any clause in the bill which prohibits such cross-membership, but since he made specific reference to it, I wonder whether he could expand on that and tell us where the bill expressly allows for it.

Senator Atkins: Honourable senators, as part of its responsibilities under the act, the board is empowered to appoint the committees. First, the chairman and the president are automatic *ex officio* members of both subcommittees. There is nothing stopping the board members from serving on both committees. There is nothing stopping the membership on the French language committee from representing other parts of the country. That is what I am saying when I talk about the cross-membership of the subcommittees of the board.

Senator Graham: I suppose, for purposes of clarification, then, what Senator Atkins is suggesting is that, besides the chairman and the president, directors from various parts of the country could serve on both subcommittees.

Senator Atkins: Yes.