

Government Orders

Keewatin channel at various times during the week. Some programs are simultaneously broadcasted in English and northern native languages through the use of CBC Radio.

In the spring of 1981, native organizations in the western N.W.T. received CRTC approval to broadcast through the Cancom system. The Native Communication Society of the western Arctic in Yellowknife subsequently developed a training program for native people interested in radio and television. They now have a full-scale operational radio studio and full day broadcast, including three hours in live programming with the news and aboriginal programming.

Inuvialuit Communication Society in the Inuvik region established in 1983, has the television production studio in Inuvik and has broadcast through the CBC network since 1985.

With all this, the government does not believe legislation is required. This is very confusing for many people, with the amount of activity and the amount of resources that have been expended to train people to deliver programs in a very challenging field, the field of aboriginal languages. Even developing the terminology to accommodate modern concepts is being denied the opportunity to flourish.

My specific concern with regard to national unity is best expressed by one of my constituents who on July 24, 1989 wrote a letter to the Prime Minister. She wrote: "I am writing to protest the budget cuts to the CBC contained in your government's Budget". Even at that time, that was a concern. She said that the CBC plays an essential role in maintaining Canada's identity as a separate nation from the United States and that this role would become even more important as free trade erodes our identity as Canadians. "Please reconsider your intent to slash the CBC's funding and ensure the CBC receives the resources required to continue to act as a strong, cultural unifying force for Canada." This was put forward by one of my constituents.

I have received numerous concerns from my constituents, one of whom is a broadcaster and a person who works in the field of broadcasting. He takes much exception to the whole idea of privatization of CBC. This constituent is not only a broadcaster, but also an artist and has had the opportunity to express some northern interpretations of his artistic endeavours through a recording by CBC.

So have other renowned northern artists such as Charlie Panagoniak. There are many other young artists who I can think of from the communities who have had the opportunity to produce records and to express in their aboriginal languages the very essence of who they are in the songs and in the music of their people.

We have had numerous applications that have been put forward to numerous sources for moneys to produce recordings of Inuit music or Dene music that express the cultures of the north. These are the kinds of things that were supported by CBC. Many of the people who are trained and dedicated to the whole idea of broadcasting for the north are fearful if in fact there are cuts. I know that it is being denied across the way by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Communications that in fact there will not be those kinds of cuts.

Well, it is very good to hear because for many of the people who are trained and dedicated to working for the northern broadcasting service it is more than just a job for them. It is a labour of love. It is something they believe in and something they are very studied in. It is a commitment on their part to bring to southern Canada and to bring to northerners, not just news and information from the south but from the whole world. It is also a commitment to bring knowledge from the various parts of the north.

• (2140)

When we speak about the north, we are at the stage in development of the north that is very important. I guess we are on the brink of our true constitutional development, where northerners will take their true place in Confederation. There is lots of talk about many issues that are important to the north.

Who brings to the north the importance of what happens at the national level or what happens in the Persian Gulf? It is CBC. Usually it is CBC television and CBC radio. Who brings to the north the importance of what happens in one region? In Nunavut, it brings the news of what is happening with the land claims in the eastern Arctic to the west. Who brings the news from the west to the east? It is CBC. It has always been so.