

Supply—C.B.C.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

1. Grant in respect of the net operating amount required to discharge the responsibilities of the national broadcasting service, \$85,900,000.

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Chairman, as I explained last Thursday evening when I introduced the estimates of my department, I now intend to make a second general statement devoted to the so-called cultural institutions, namely the C.B.C., the B.B.G., the national film board, the national museum, the national gallery, the department of public printing and stationery, the public archives and the national library.

Mr. Nielsen: And the Canadian Liberal federation.

Mr. Lamontagne: That is not cultural.

This statement will be in the nature of a progress report on these various agencies and, although it will appear to be too long, it will certainly contribute to and shorten my participation in this debate.

When the estimates of these agencies have been approved, I propose to make a third and final statement on the estimates of the centennial commission.

Mr. Baldwin: Plus many explanations.

Mr. Lamontagne: That will depend on you.

I hope that the discussion which will follow my report will be a constructive one. In recent months most of the agencies for which I am responsible have been re-examining their activities and their administrative structures in the light of what are or should be their national goals. When these reappraisals are completed, and I hope they will be in the first part of 1965, new legislation will be needed in several cases to bring about necessary changes. That is why I hope we will have a constructive discussion during this debate, and that the members of the committee will not hesitate to make suggestions, so that we can take them into account in drafting the legislation. This is the time to improve and strengthen our national institutions. This is not the time to weaken and destroy them.

[Translation]

Before submitting my report on the various federal cultural institutions, I would like hon. members to consider for a few minutes at least, the need of a more co-ordinated and dynamic federal policy, as well as the general aims of such a policy.

As I have said on various occasions, there is a considerable lack of balance between our material and cultural developments, between

[The Chairman.]

the body and the spirit of our nation. In the economic field, the pace of our development has been very rapid, more particularly since the start of the 20th century, and we have now reached one of the highest standards of living in the world. To achieve this, of course we called upon private enterprise, but, on the other hand, we did not hesitate to ask for help from the state, either to stimulate individual initiative, or to complement it.

With respect to culture, we have drawn our inspiration far too much from the American tradition, and not enough from the European. We have left our cultural development almost exclusively in the hands of individuals and private organizations, whose potential is necessarily limited, in spite of occasionally outstanding efforts. As a consequence, our cultural life is anaemic and dangerously exposed to American encroachment. Moreover, to the extent that they have progressed, our main cultures have developed in isolation, for a lack of opportunities and financial means constituted the major obstacle to the setting up of frequent and worthy contacts.

Our poorness and, perhaps even more, our cultural isolation largely account for the present tension in Canada which, in many cases, is due to frustration on the part of those who are forced to live on the fringe of our society.

Encouragement to research and creative work in the field of humanities and social sciences is clearly insufficient. In spite of heroic sacrifices on the part of certain individuals, our artistic groups can barely survive and, even in Canada, their influence is mostly local in scope. Popular culture is having a hard time getting organized. Even amateur sport has its difficulties.

This lack of culture is the more tragic in our contemporary society that technical and economic progress leave more time for leisure and creative activities. Our society will truly be a failure if after having taken the human element out of man's work, it does not succeed in uplifting his moments of leisure.

[Text]

Moreover, as long as we fail to build a strong cultural life and to develop frequent exchanges between our cultures, I am quite sure we will continue to be uneasy about our country and worried about its future, that many young Canadians will continue to leave Canada and to be more interested in other countries than in ours, and that we will continue to ask if Canada constitutes a nation because we will have failed to develop a real Canadian identity.