

Broadcasting Act

The Ottawa Citizen of Saturday, June 25, had this to say: "The federal Government's long awaited broadcast policy looks solid and impressive". *The Globe and Mail* of the same day said: "It passes the immediate test of increasing the variety and volume of Canadian programming".

[Translation]

... Instead of burying the Caplan-Sauvageau Report, this Bill embodies its spirit and follows its main policy thrusts.

[English]

"A small, well-stuffed goody bag that gives Canadian television viewers their first real hope of an all-Canadian CBC and pledges a second publicly supported network within two years," said *The Ottawa Citizen*.

[Translation]

... Miss MacDonald's Broadcasting Bill at first glance is very promising for improvement in the quality and quantity of French-language programs.

Daniel Lemay, *La Presse*, Saturday, June 25:

... For the first time, the Canadian Broadcasting Act will recognize the distinct character of the French radio and television industry and market.

Manon Cornellier, *Le Devoir*, Saturday, June 25:

[English]

The Globe and Mail of Monday, June 27, said: "It is a major accomplishment for Miss MacDonald to come out with a package which not only reaffirms the central role of public broadcasting, and backs it up with some more money, but also takes a swipe at the private television broadcasters for their miserable contribution to Canadian programming". There are several other quotes.

[Translation]

The Coalition for the defence of the CBC's French services:

Miss MacDonald has met our main demands, and in terms of general principles—like journalistic independence, freedom of expression, having two presidents for the CBC and recognizing the distinct character of the French services—we are very satisfied.

And on the French CBC program, *Le Point*, of June 23, 1988:

... task force report, the central role of the CBC is maintained and the distinct features of French-language television are recognized... Many things in this report satisfy me...

[English]

There is also a letter I would like to quote from.

[Translation]

From the *Coalition pour la défense des services français de Radio-Canada*, a letter addressed to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Prime Minister,

This is to inform you that the *Coalition pour la défense des services français de Radio-Canada* supports Bill C-136, the Broadcasting Act, introduced by the Hon. Flora MacDonald.

The proposed legislation largely coincides with the position we have defended for many months and is more sensitive to the needs of our society than the present legislation. We are very pleased with your Government's proposal to recognize in the Act the distinct characteristics of the Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation's French and English services and of the radio-television industries.

[English]

How did the Canadian Conference of the Arts respond to the broadcast Bill and policy? It responded by saying:

—newly elected CCA President, Paul Siren, generally welcomed the bill and policy on broadcasting, tabled yesterday in the House of Commons by Communications Minister, Flora MacDonald.

"In its wording and intent, the broadcasting bill and accompanying policy are a step in the right direction"... "We applaud the government's objective to strengthen and increase Canadian programming, particularly in English- and French-language television drama, and welcome the new funds for the CBC.

We also had approval from Television Northern Canada which said:

Minister of Culture and Communications Titus Allooloo welcomed today's announcement by federal Minister of Communications Flora MacDonald on funding for satellite distribution of a new northern television service.

"The new public/educational television network, as put forward by Television Northern Canada (TVNC), is a major step forward in northern communications," said Mr. Allooloo.

These are but a few of the quotes of those who have responded very favourably to this Bill.

We as Canadians already have access to what is perhaps the most diverse and competitive broadcasting system in the world. This system has grown and developed at an astonishing pace over the past 20 years while the broadcast Act itself has remained unchanged.

[Translation]

Broadcasting is fundamentally important to our political and cultural sovereignty. That is why our Canadian broadcasting system must be an accurate reflection of who we as Canadians are, how we behave and how we view the world.

It is in fact the purpose of Bill C-136 to achieve this goal, especially with respect to French broadcasting. It must be recognized that French broadcasting and English broadcasting do not operate under the same conditions. The point of promoting Canadian programming in French Canada is to have programs that enable viewers to identify with characters that are like them. It is a matter of linguistic and cultural survival.

French broadcasters have consistently provided the requisite amount of drama programming. Thus, quality, not quantity is the issue here, because as programming costs escalate, broadcasters may be tempted to resort to foreign, less costly productions. Before this starts happening on a large scale, the Bill on broadcasting proposes a legislative solution.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time, the proposed legislation recognizes that French and English markets require different policy approaches, and these differences will have to be reflected in CRTC decisions and within the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation itself.