

*Government Orders*

I believe that many of the amendments that we have made were worth-while to make this bill fitting for the kind of Canada that we see and, when we look back on our history and down the road to where we were headed, the road to this day has been a very long one.

I would take up too much time thanking all who have helped make this process work for me, my party and, I think to be fair, in the interests of getting a better broadcast bill for all Canadians.

Indeed, I could not even attempt to count the witnesses I have seen, all the meetings I have attended, all the briefs I have read, all the submissions I have heard, all the lawyers who have offered their advice, all the representatives of industry who have done their lobbying, all the experts who have graciously come forward to make their contribution to the creation of a better broadcasting bill.

We also cannot forget the members of this House and the staff of the committees in this Parliament and the last Parliament on the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture and the legislative committees that joined us in this exercise. I would also like particularly to thank the parliamentary secretary, the member for Edmonton Southwest, whose knowledge of this bill, as government spokesman and previously as chairman of the standing committee, and explanations have been clear and unequivocal. He has the right to his opinion as we have the right to ours. He has been helpful on many occasions while maintaining full commitment to his government's points of view.

• (1830)

I want to thank Nancy Jean Waugh, who is my legislative assistant, for her hard work and dedication. She was diligent and gave great commitment, exemplary and of immeasurable help.

I should, as well, acknowledge all the Canadians who have been moved to join in this debate, writing to me and to members on all sides of this House about this chapter in the history of Canadian broadcasting that the government seems intent on closing today. They obviously cared enough about their country to sit down and write a letter about it.

The bill, as it stands, is seriously flawed. I want to bring to your attention what was said by Mr. Serge Gouin, President and Chief Executive Officer of Télémétropole. He says:

I therefore add my voice to those of all the other representatives of the industry who have come to you to express their concerns and to ask you to postpone passing the bill in order to ensure that the final version is in line with the conditions prevailing in this sector and represents a positive change rather than a giant step backwards.

In summary, the bill fails to address important policy matters. It could do more to ensure that our system better reflects Canada to Canadians in terms of greater Canadian content. It could do better to prevent global technologies from wresting control of our broadcasting system away from Canadians. It should do more to avoid the North Americanization of all that we see on our screens. It should not allow the Balkanization of our system into regional ones. It should better entrench the CBC as our unifying, national broadcaster.

I and my party plan to continue our fight, a fight in which we said in the very beginning that if a new broadcasting bill was proposed by this government then it would have to be true to its roots as we know it could be, and true to a vision of Canada that goes right back to the time when a Conservative government created the CBC.

This government has listened at times and, at other times, found it easy to say no. I believe it has made some obvious mistakes. This bill, to be very simple, is flawed. It is not true enough to ensure a Canadian system for tomorrow. But pass it, it will, for the last time I checked the government held the majority in this place.

I just want the record to show that I and my fellow Liberals did everything we could; studied the bill, listened to witnesses and proposed amendments, while trying to improve it, better support our shared set of values, and better enhance our shared sense of national unity and national purpose. If we have achieved that in some small measure then the effort has not been in vain.

**Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this particular bill in somewhat of a pinch-hitting capacity because even though I am the newly appointed critic for communications, arts and culture, much of the detailed work in this piece of legislation, many of the reasoned amendments that have been put before the House that we have debated and discussed through the months, were essentially brought forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.