

I hate to sound like a Torontonian, but the CBC is truly world-class. Are we to give up our kind of programming for some sort of Bart Armstrong of Arnprior or Roseanne of Rosedale? Is this what you want? Is this what competition means? Good heavens, Mr. Speaker, this cannot be true.

I said before I was going to mention *Chez Helene*. I have to admit that by the time *Chez Helene* came on television, I was a little too old for that kind of programming, but I frequently watched it with the children I baby sat, and I watched it later with my godchildren and other younger members of my family.

I think the cancellation of *Chez Helene* shows a particular tragedy in our Canadian communication and culture experience. *Chez Helene* was an example of how the CBC could be used for us to speak to each other. What better vehicle to promote national unity than to have small children right across this country start learning communication skills so that they can use those communication skills to talk to each other—the two major language groups in this country.

That is what we need to do, to settle this distemper of our times that we are living in. We need to talk to each other. We need to listen to each other. We need to understand each other's terms of reference. We need to understand each other's hopes and aspirations.

We particularly need to know that they are not very different, that what brings us together is so much stronger than what pulls us apart. What we need to know is that there are institutions that can help us do that. We know, because it has been proven, that the CBC is one of the institutions that has always helped us do that.

This is one of the most important bills that we will see in this House in this session. It goes to the very root and heart of what Canadianism is and it goes to the very root and heart of whether Canadianism is going to grow, thrive and blossom, or whether it is going to wither on the vine.

I do not want to see it wither on the vine. I know you do not, Mr. Speaker. The member for Hamilton—Wentworth does not; the parliamentary secretary does not; my colleagues on both sides of the House do not. We are all here in this Chamber because we want to see our country and its citizens enrich themselves and thrive.

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It does that by knowing why we are here and not being afraid to say that national unity is not only something each one of us subscribes to; not only something that each one of us prays for every night; but it is something that we are prepared to look at our national institutions and say, "Yes, you have a mandate to assist and foster national unity for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast".

I hope, Mr. Speaker, in this year of grace 1990, words like that are not said too late. I hope that words like that will not fall on deaf ears.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to hear from our lady of sorrows, the hon. member for Halifax who was lamenting about the damage that could be done to national unity by Bill C-40.

[Translation]

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this narrow-minded opinion is the manifestation of a Christian inspired cult.

[English]

That having been said, I think that it is up to the committees of the boards of the CBC. I stress that no one is proposing splitting the boards. I know the hon. member has studied the bill well enough to know that any such committees would be governed according to the bylaws of the corporation, and that they would be participated in by the president and the chairman of the corporation.

• (2050)

I would submit to the hon. member for Halifax that it is in those committees of the boards that we can best put our hopes for a restoration of programs like *Chez Helene*, or perhaps something more appropriate for today's time.

I was intrigued to listen to the hon. member, who brought back a number of memories of some of my favourite shows. Many of the examples,—with two exceptions—*Front Page Challenge* and *Hockey Night in Canada* are programs which have been on the air since 1968.

I picked that year very deliberately, not to get personal about ages here or viewing habits connected with ages, because we all age at roughly the same rate I think, Mr. Speaker.