

out across this thin line, any form of the arts and communications in Canada is enormously expensive. Not only are we gravy for the American market because they have already got all their costs back down there, but the arts are terribly expensive for us to do here. For us to have a radio network which happens to be the largest in the world, and a television network which is also the largest in terms of extent in the world, is a very expensive business.

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The importance of culture

Now, everyone who has studied this problem in Canada of whatever political party, every royal commission in this country which has ever studied it, has come to the same conclusion: you are not going to have any arts or communication or culture of any distinct kind in this country unless the state enters in somehow. Otherwise, you are going to be subjected to the most massive dumping job that has ever occurred.

The great Canadian — now an American — economist, John Kenneth Galbraith, was interviewed in 1967.... The questioner said to Galbraith: "Do you think Canadians should be more concerned about cultural domination by the United States or about economic domination?" Galbraith answered: "This is an important question and one which I think is very much misunderstood. In good Calvinist fashion, when Canadians talk about cultural autonomy, they really have economics in mind; they follow my friend, Walter Gordon, and talk about economic autonomy, which on the whole is rather unimportant because it doesn't really exist any more anywhere in the world. If I were still a practicing (as distinct from an advisory) Canadian, I would be much more concerned about maintaining the cultural integrity of the broadcasting system and with making sure Canada has an active independent theatre, book publishing industry, newspapers, magazines, and schools of poets and painters, and I would make sure that Canadian theatres and artists receive encouragement and that people aren't totally dependent on American magazines." But the questioner kept boring in on Galbraith, saying: "But don't you think that Canada should make a determined effort to increase its stake in the Canadian economy?", and Galbraith said: "Not really, I would say this is a very minor consideration as compared

with increasing the Canadian stake in the things I just mentioned. These are the things that count."

I think that is extraordinary coming from an economist and someone who can hardly be accused of being a Canadian nationalist. The fact of the matter is that we are in the pickle we are in right now in this country, breaking up into various parts, or at least under the threat of breaking up, precisely because we have neglected our cultural affairs in the past. We don't know each other across this country. It's been pointed out many times that Canada is not a 'melting pot' like the United States; it is a kind of salad in which each of the ingredients retains its own flavour. We call it pluralism in this country. But to the extent that we have known each other across this country, it has been due to our writers, our painters, our singers, our musicians and playwrights. That is how we come to know each other. So, you could say that in the past our politics have been subsidized by our artists....

Canada's artistic sector vigorous

In the last twenty-five years...we built up in Canada a complex but very vigorous artistic sector. We now have activities of this kind going on right across the country and a remarkable amount of exchange among them. These activities are supported by various governments, federal, provincial, and civic too, which have been so far independent from political interference....

[Nevertheless, three threats exist] and here they are: the first, I think, can best be connected with the Lambert Report, a report on government financing, the principles of which have been accepted by all the major parties and which suggest that a much tougher, more stringent system of accountability be instituted between all the government agencies and crown corporations and so on, and the government. This is well and good, but when accountability is taken to mean not that you do the best you can with your resources and are held accountable for them afterwards, but that you take this money and you do what you are told with it, we are in a very different situation. That is the present danger; if there are more funds forthcoming for the arts in Canada, it will have strings attached. That, in my view, is not accountability; that is what the French call *dirigisme* — dictatorship — of the funding....

The second danger comes from something which is in the platforms of all the parties, the suggestion that certain decisions in the arts are political by nature and should be recognized as such. For example, should North Bay have a symphony? Should there be an art gallery in Tignish? And so on. Now, that sounds quite sensible — that is a political decision.... Politicians don't know where the real needs are in a community; they don't know whether the artistic community of the country is capable of supporting another symphony orchestra, another dance company, and another theatre. But aside from everything else, if a company is started who is going to look after it? Why, of course, the Canada Council and the other organizations which are set up to look after artistic affairs. In other words, in my view you cannot split the political decision from the professional one, and the decision should be made in consultation. It cannot be made without a political input nor can it be made without an artistic input. This is the second danger.

The third, which again seems to me common to all of the political parties, is the idea that decentralization in the arts is going to solve a lot of difficulties. Political decentralization, giving more power to the provinces and the regions, may be fine, but I would point out to you a difference between politics and the arts. In politics similarities are valuable, common rules are valuable; we can get along more easily together if we have certain set regulations and standards for the way we run our governments. In other words, homogenization has some merit politically. It has none whatever in the field of the arts. In the arts homogenization is death. We want all the differences we can get. Variety is the spice of life in the arts. We don't need to make every dance company across this country look the same — that would be death. We want all the differences we can get.... It is a quite different thing. So, decentralization has been from the very beginning, the very core of what federal grants to the arts has been all about....

Artistic agencies decentralize efforts

When we started the Charlottetown Festival, the one thing we knew could set this crazy scheme off on the right track was that we could get federal grants for it. Why? Because it was going to be the

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