

*Broadcasting Act*

underlie their public lives in English, should not be reflected in broadcasting, that this is not an obligation explicitly laid on the CBC and Radio-Canada, is to recognize one of the most fundamental shortcomings of broadcasting.

I make this point because we spend a certain amount of money in the Department of Secretary of State, the multiculturalism directorate or sector, whatever one wants to call it, especially in the new context of which the Conservatives make so much. It has a bit more money and some new initiatives and is trying desperately, as an election draws near, to catch up on the past. However, whatever happens over there, precious little happens in the broadcasting area, and the Department of Communications quite clearly carries on along the old lines. Certainly there is some stirring of recognition of more needing to be done. I want, in a moment, to get to the matter of alternative broadcasting services.

In Clause 3.(1)(n)(iii) we have the declaration that the broadcasting will:

—be in English and French, reflecting the different needs and circumstances of each official language community—

That is, it seems to me, a refusal to recognize, to lay explicitly on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Radio-Canada, the obligation to reflect the multicultural reality of the country in various ways, even if it does that in English and French broadcasting.

The changes that need to be made in these areas might well be recognized if we look at one other clause which is an important addition to the Bill. The recognition of the need for broadcasting in aboriginal languages and to the aboriginal peoples is provided for in subclause (k) which states:

—programming that reflects the aboriginal cultures of Canada should be provided within the Canadian broadcasting system as resources become available for the purpose—

There is that fatal last clause, of course, always the limited resources. What has been made available in the various regions of Canada, and I think particularly of northwestern Ontario where I have some sense of it, including the hour of broadcasting in Oji-Cree which occurs on CBQ radio in Thunder Bay every Friday afternoon from two o'clock to three o'clock is an example, a perfectly appropriate, absolutely essential recognition within the Canadian broadcasting system, within the CBC English language service on this station of another language group.

If it is recognition of the aboriginal peoples, let that provide an instance of compensation for those enormous crimes of the past carried out by agents of English and French Christian civilization in this country, the missionaries particularly and the schools which sought to stamp out the use of the various languages as pagan excrescences for which there was no place in today's Canada. Let us make that good.

There in the Bill, in a paragraph which says all the right things—although I regret the last clause about the constraints of finances—is an instance in a Canada of which my view of multiculturalism is a view which recognizes that we begin with

official bilingualism and recognize the fact of aboriginal peoples. Having done both of those things there is no way that we can stop with biculturalism and the aboriginal peoples. We must recognize that the country is multicultural.

In recognizing the fact of a diversity of culture there may still be that old attitude, a mix of white man's burden of Christian missions, completely secularized of course, that these cultures will disappear, that you do not have to do very much except give people some vague sense of what these people do, of the peculiar ways of these ethnic communities, and if you have enlightened them to that extent you have done your job.

That sort of attitude which is in the legislation has permeated communications policy throughout the history of this Department back to the 1960s. Those attitudes fall completely short of providing for the reality that we have in a multicultural Canada.

What are we given in the Bill as the prime means of making up for the great vacuum which exists in CBC, Radio-Canada and obviously in far too much of the private broadcasting which is a matter of some information? The broadcasters say proudly that news comes first. Well, that is about the only local thing that they do, so inevitably it comes first. There is very often nothing after it except perhaps a bit of community broadcasting shoved into some of the lowest listening hours on Sunday morning. For the rest we get American shows, the travesty in the Canadian broadcasting system which CTV has provided over the years with a bunch of stations which exist simply to print money, not to do anything for the Canadian people. That system quite obviously is not going to meet the need which I am addressing.

What are we given in the Bill to respond to recommendation 24 from the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture which declared that the programming carried by the system should provide a balanced representation of Canadian society reflecting its multicultural and bilingual realities, its aboriginal peoples, and the composition of its population with respect to sex, age, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, and mental or physical handicaps? There, in language from the Charter, we have the points of diversity in the Canadian population cited.

What does Bill C-136 do in addressing that particular recommendation? Well, be it noted that we are given some provisions for alternative television broadcasting services in English and French. I went over to chat with the Minister for a few moments to be quite clear about this because I was looking for some kind of provision in the Broadcasting Act for multilingual radio and television. I thought this was where the Minister of Communications was providing a gap for it.

In fact, although this particular term is not defined in Clause 2 of the Bill where the definitions are provided, alternative television programming services are not an attempt to provide for all those stop gaps, if you will. I do not mean to disparage any one of them which provide broadcasting in various languages and try, in the metropolitan markets of our