

Government Orders

their region and they will become very sensitive to that. That is fine in itself, but what about the bigger picture? Who is going to be concerned about all of the country? Who is going to be concerned about what I call the pan-Canadian view of the country?

I know it was already pointed out and the hon. Minister for Communications mentioned this afternoon that under the legislation the panels will be charged with the responsibility of consulting the full body of the CRTC. Somehow or other, through consultation, each panel will have this national view. So there will not be an inconsistency between a panel that is rendering decisions on matters relating to Quebec and a panel rendering decisions for British Columbia. I asked the question, Mr. Speaker. The legislation is not clear as to how they will consult, or how someone is forced to consult. What is consultation? Does consultation mean picking up the phone and saying "Hey, Joe, we have this matter down in Toronto. This is how it is going to go. What do you think of that? Good, wonderful, thank you". End of speech, end of conversation, end of consultation. I am perhaps a little sardonic in my description but I think my point is made. The legislation does not really define consultation.

Let me just finish by saying—and again I want to paraphrase the Minister for Communications— that the essence of broadcasting is programming and that the rest is really housekeeping. He is right. Mr. Speaker, you are a former broadcaster. The hon. parliamentary secretary is a former broadcaster. We know if you take programming out of broadcasting, you have nothing left.

It seems to me that what this bill fails to do is to address the very essence of broadcasting, which is programming. I think it does address the matter of housekeeping. I hope I am wrong. I would really like to see a proliferation of Canadian programming. We know that we are in a sea of American programming. We know that in many cases Canadian broadcasters, at least those on the private side, would find it financially impossible to continue without American programming. If we are

going to have the kind of broadcast system of which we can be proud, one that will truly serve this country, and when you serve the country you serve national unity—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I regret to inform the hon. member that his time has expired. But just like a true professional broadcaster, you brought it right up to the second.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see you in the chair tonight. I know you will listen attentively to the debate because you have a very deep concern about the issue at hand.

I want to add a few remarks to the comments made by my hon. colleague from Winnipeg. My hon. colleague and I have discussed this many times and we are of a like mind. I think his views tonight represent the views of someone that not only has been in the broadcast industry with CBC but a view from a Canadian who understands the role of the CBC and national unity.

One of the things I am really concerned about is the loss of the mandate by the CBC under Bill C-40 to promote national unity in this country. I have heard some members opposite, and I think the hon. parliamentary secretary inferred that this was a dangerous clause because it could lead to propaganda. I do not think that anything a Crown corporation or a public corporation can do to foster greater understanding between Canadians, no matter where they live in this country, should ever be considered propaganda. It is necessary education so that the tolerance we used to have as Canadians can return and grow and foster.

My hon. colleague from Winnipeg, in all of his speeches has certainly underlined that. He showed the bankruptcy of ideas of the government opposite and particularly the minister opposite, who I challenged the other night to stand up after I spoke and give a rousing speech about national unity, about Canada, because I could not find any other reason why a minister of the Crown would tamper with a clause that was benign, that was doing no harm and actually was doing a lot of good in the country.