

Government Orders

group in a specific location or time; third, it may refer to the activities of artists or intellectuals in a given society”.

Except for the last definition, which only applies to cultural producers, it appears that culture includes a wide array of information and knowledge which allow individuals to develop (including through education, as shown by Williams' first definition), to adjust and to play a role in their community (as shown by the author's second definition). From this viewpoint, it would seem that artists and intellectuals as well as cultural producers not only participate in the intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development of individuals, but also help create an awareness of their living environment. This shows the importance of their activity, which comes under all three definitions of culture according to Williams.”

Canadian economist Michael Walker also gives the following definition, and I quote: “What we refer to as culture is simply a society-wide summation of the individual choices people make”.

From this perspective, culture is essentially demand as expressed by the markets. This definition puts less emphasis on cultural content, as a set of information and knowledge, than on the mechanism that promotes culture, namely a market free of any restrictions.

To compare the definitions provided by Williams and Walker is somewhat of a joke, but it goes to show the conflict between sociological and economic approaches to culture, and particularly the historical conflict between economy and culture which has characterized to this day the evolution of industrialized nations.

To conclude, the proposed amendments to the Copyright Act are imposed upon us from the outside, as a result of multilateral trade agreements signed by Canada. Are we going to let foreign countries decide what is good for Canada in terms of culture or will we pass legislation that reflects our directions, our wishes and those of our creative artists as well as the needs of our cultural industry, which promotes Canadian and Quebec talent? The Bloc Québécois has made a choice and opted for the cultural sovereignty of this country.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to heartily congratulate my colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata on the excellent speech she just gave us. I find it quite revealing that she could make a twenty-minute speech dealing specifically with the cultural issue of the Uruguay Round accords and their applications to Canada.

She presented some facts on the implications of the Uruguay Round accord for culture in Canada and more specifically for copyright in Canada. Once again, I find it quite revealing that international trade agreements force us to make some adjustments to Canada's copyright law.

• (1225)

For months, my colleague has been clamoring for the federal government to legislate clearly on the issue of copyright. Is there not some ambiguity, a problem when the federal government is forced by international trade agreements to act or react on the subject of copyrights?

I put my question to the hon. member because I am sure that she has some points to make about this. Personally, I am very surprised that the federal government has taken so long to legislate on copyrights and that it is doing so in a roundabout way, when forced to by international agreements. Is this not further proof that the present Minister of Canadian Heritage lacks clout and credibility?

Mrs. Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that it is imperative for Canada to legislate as soon as possible, calmly and in all fairness with respect to copyright. Of course, this is a very complex subject, but it will only increase in complexity as we travel further on the electronic highway. It will be complexified.

In terms of culture, I am particularly concerned when I hear Mrs. Hills tell us that neither the FTA nor NAFTA afford us any protection, while we had been led to believe they did. If indeed we are not protected under these agreements and the GATT agreement will prevail, this means in the short run that, before we know it, Canada will have been invaded by the American culture.

I would not want to be accused of trying to score political points here, but it is high time that the people of Canada, from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island, realize that the threat to English Canada is much greater than the threat to the franco-phone community in Quebec. The American culture is much more of a threat to you than to us. We are French-speaking and intend to remain so. That is why we want to leave this country which is oblivious of the fact that it is going to the dogs.

Wake up, English Canada, before it is too late and you have become Americans! Because we are your credit card, right now, and we are about to cut your financing.

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the presentation and certainly would find areas of agreement in it. However I have a real concern when I hear about a bogeyman being out there in the world that is trying to close in on us and shut us down. I am not quite sure what the member was talking about concerning all the threats that exist outside the country.

We are becoming a smaller and smaller world and in fact have to start moving outward. We cannot stay looking in as we so often hear the Bloc talking about. We cannot hold everything in and keep everybody out.