

*Government Orders*

I think I have one minute remaining on my speaking time. I would like to conclude by taking a look at the people who head these institutions, and the Minister of Canadian Heritage in particular, the hon. member for Laval West who, I think everyone will agree, is a very nice guy, but does not hesitate to impose his views on organizations under his jurisdiction. Just think back to recent events; these past few weeks, in fact during two weeks, the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party have been asking for the resignation of the heritage minister for having interceded with the CRTC on behalf of his constituents.

During two whole weeks, during question period, the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party raised repeatedly with the Prime Minister the need for the Minister of Canadian Heritage to resign for having interfered with a quasi-judicial organization which is in fact the equivalent of a tribunal. One can wonder what this minister will be able to do, in Quebec in particular, with his propaganda department come the day when the people of Quebec will decide their future.

• (1650)

One last point. This minister will find strong support within his caucus. Let me name two supporters. First, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, who is remembered in Quebec in particular for the statement he made in 1977 about the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which, to my mind, is certainly one of the most prominent cultural diffusion vehicles in Quebec. With the prospect of the 1980 referendum in mind, he said he did not want to see the French network of the CBC take a neutral stand in presenting both sides of the issue, adding that at the time of the referendum, CBC employees would be expected to be unequivocally on the pro-Canada side.

Recently, the Prime Minister himself said that the operation of the CBC was governed by an act under which it was required to make the benefits of living in Canada known. That is what the CBC was established for, he said.

The message is clear, and we are perfectly justified in being concerned about the establishment of this department.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saint John—Veterans affairs.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Victoria—Haliburton.

[English]

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise today to join the debate and once again speak in support of Bill C-53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Bill C-53 must be recognized as part of a greater reorganization of government. This reorganization will allow for a more efficient organizational structure in the department which in the long run will prove of greater benefit to the Canadian taxpayer, something all of us should be in favour of.

Although this department had its beginning under the previous government in June 1993, the current government of which I am a member has improved the department markedly. I am pleased to say these improvements are reflected in many accomplishments of the department in the past year in the area of heritage conservation, official languages, national parks and amateur sports to name a few.

With this in mind, the government is now proceeding with the task of confirming the reorganization of the Department of Canadian Heritage to better serve all Canadians. I believe it is important to remember that this department serves a large group of Canadians, not special interest groups as some members across the floor have criticized. The department serves national parks across the country, amateur sports across the country, heritage sites across the country and numerous cultural exhibits across the country. It is truly a national department dealing with Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

In my riding of Victoria—Haliburton in Ontario I think of the Trent-Severn waterway system which has transported millions of people in the last 100 years. It allows users to travel from Trenton to Georgian Bay on a heritage waterway system. In particular, each summer as a direct result of the commitment to heritage by this department, I see the operation of a blacksmith shop along the Rideau Canal system which stretches from Kingston to Ottawa and contains numerous heritage locks. This operation shows the importance of heritage and history in Canada. Add to that the diligent work and commitment of the department in the Trent-Severn and Rideau Canal systems and its important heritage will be preserved for future generations.

Culturally, certain members opposite argue that if the free market does not support certain types of art then they should not be produced. There are many examples of experimental or cutting edge art which appear on display in our National Gallery here in Ottawa. Once again some members opposite see no bottom line need for these pieces of art when in fact some of the