

*The Address*

I hope to update the Copyright Act so as to take into account new technologies that have changed the way cultural products are distributed and to recognize the rights of creators. We must also diversify the funding sources of our cultural industries. We absolutely need a better marketing plan for our cultural production at the international level.

In addition to being composed of two linguistic groups, the Canadian market is too small to ensure that our producers and creators survive and thrive. A global cultural market is coming into existence and Canada must promote in that market its unique production whose international reputation is well established.

• (1025)

I wish to remind the House that the department of heritage also has the mandate to ensure Canadian participation in international exhibitions. I was thrilled to learn that the last Canadian manifestation of this kind, which took place last year in Taejon, South Korea, has proven to be most profitable because for the first time Canada relied on the economic partnership.

Furthermore, the evolution of our society prompts us to review the operation and the mandate of our great cultural institutions. Among them, broadcasting is without doubt the most popular and most powerful cultural tool. More than 99 per cent of Canadians own a radio, 99 per cent a television set and more than 75 per cent a VCR. That shows the immense power which these media have at their disposal.

In this perspective, it is important that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation find its proper place as a public broadcaster and that a funding mechanism better suited to the present situation be put in place.

The government will announce shortly the appointment of the new president of the CBC.

[English]

The government's commitment to Canadian strategy for an information superhighway is a good sign for our cultural industries. The information superhighway will be more than a technological infrastructure. It will be a powerful vehicle for Canadian content. It will enable us to distribute our cultural products more effectively and make them accessible to all Canadians.

This initiative will naturally be in keeping with our Canadian cultural policy. I will soon begin working on this project with my colleague, the Minister of Industry.

[Translation]

Just as important for our creative industry is the Canada Council. Cultural products are not just consumable and exportable goods. They are, first and foremost, the works of artists, creative men and women without whom the cultural industry could not survive.

The Canada Council's function is to support those artists when they start on a project or do experimental work. It also provides a fund that offers financial stability to the performing arts, theatre, ballet and orchestras. It is therefore vital that we ensure maximum efficiency on the part of this institution which is essential to the promotion of the creative spirit in Canada.

Given the shift toward globalism which marks the end of this millennium, we must rely more than ever on our creative men and women to provide us with a feeling of identity and a sense of belonging.

[English]

It is clear that the mandate of the Department of Heritage is a challenging one lying at the very heart of the major issues facing our country today.

Now more than ever Canada's cultural complexity must be seen not as a problem but as an asset at a time when opening up to the rest of the world is just as important as preserving our own identity.

Whether it is our historic sites, our national parks, the achievements of our athletes, the influence of our artists, the diversity of our population or the success of our cultural industries and institutions, all these things highlight our willingness to excel as a people.

[Translation]

I intend to bank on this huge wealth and particularly on the younger generation to ensure our country holds an enviable position at the dawn of the third millennium.

It is no doubt clear by now that the Department of Canadian Heritage, far from being obsessed with the past, is instead looking toward the future. It is resolutely concerned with the important challenges which face the societies of today.

I have faith in Canadian men and women, and I call upon them to take up these challenges and help our country to advance in the world of tomorrow.

• (1030)

**Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I must congratulate the member and minister on his election in Laval-Ouest. This time he was luckier than in 1988, when he was my opponent in Longueuil. I am pleased to ask him some questions in accordance with his responsibilities as Minister of Canadian Heritage.

First, as he spoke about multiculturalism, it would seem that multiculturalism has not necessarily been a success, because we seem to have created ghettos between cultures instead of promoting the integration of citizens. We know that it takes about twice as long to integrate new arrivals in Canada as it does in the United States.

There is definitely a major problem with multiculturalism. I know that in Montréal at the moment there are conflicts between different cultures and it is my impression, and also the opinion of some experts, that multiculturalism is something that has created ghettos instead of promoting integration.