

Supply

Station CBQ. This radio station is based in Thunder Bay but provides a regional focus. Prior to the Government's massive cut-backs and indirect interference in the operation of the CBC, the services of CBQ were reduced.

At one time, there was a program in the morning that was broadcast throughout northwestern Ontario by CBQ. Simultaneously, there was a program that dealt with the city and the immediate area of Thunder Bay itself. We were able to provide a regional information network that was truly regional at the same time as we provided a Thunder Bay focus. The Corporation, in its wisdom, decided that it had to make some cuts and it merged those two programs. There was a dilution of the services to the region. The time of the announcers, the research staff and the news people had to be spread so thinly that if something was happening in Ear Falls, for instance, it got covered only half of the time.

As a result of the \$85 million reduction in the CBC budget, there have been serious reductions in service. These reductions may not equate the kind of reductions we saw in Ottawa, Windsor or Winnipeg, but for northwestern Ontario they are vital. We lost three full-time people and three part-time people at the radio station. In terms of numbers, as compared to 1,500 jobs as we were originally told or 700 jobs as was suggested today, the loss of those six jobs is not that great, but it meant that six services would no longer be available to northwestern Ontario.

In a community that has the only permanent international world-class sporting facility, we no longer have a dedicated sports editor. There are international events which take place in Thunder Bay like the Big Thunder Ski Jump. The whole world pays attention to us but CBC does not have a permanent news person in that community any longer to cover those kinds of events.

One of the things of which we in northwestern Ontario are proud is our ability as a broadcast centre to go beyond our own boundaries and to reach out across the country. We were able to do that through the personality of Arthur Black, an announcer who was not native to northwestern Ontario but moved there a number of years ago. He developed a style and manner that gradually grew to the point at which he was syndicated across the country, and then to the point at which the network finally decided that it made sense to originate network programming from a community like Thunder Bay. Thanks to the CBC cuts, Arthur Black's Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario show was cut in half and, for a number of reasons, he was in effect forced to go elsewhere. Beginning this summer, he will be based in the Toronto area. No longer will the show have the northwestern Ontario flavour. The longer Arthur Black is away from northwestern Ontario, the less able he will be to continue picking up on the sense of the environment and the people of the area.

My colleagues, the Hon. Member for Kenora-Rainy River and the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon (Mr. Epp) and myself entered into a campaign designed to make sure that the CBC management, the Minister and the bureaucracy of CBC knew that we did not like this tampering with our

service. We had well over 1,000 replies to our campaign, and as all Hon. Members know, we tend to measure the importance of an issue by the number of pieces of paper that come across our desks. Very clearly we were gratified by the very wide regional response we received. I would like to read into the record some of the responses we received:

Keep fighting for CBQ, the CBC and Canadian culture. The moment we stop supporting our cultural identity is the moment we start becoming Americans.

● (1740)

We are very disappointed in the cut-back, we live in a rural area and this is the only radio station (Canadian) we can get all the time—

Arthur Black is excellent! Thunder Bay CBC is a well done program given the size or lack of—

Please do not foist a centralized CBC on us! I like to think there is sufficient Northwestern Ontario information to warrant continuing CBQ regional programming!

Over the years we have noted with interest and approval the improvement in CBC radio coverage of events in the Northwest. We are saddened, concerned and somewhat angered by the current cuts as they affect CBQ—

The new Government of Canada is turning into a destructive machine not a constructive unit as the Canadian people had hoped.

We are insulted enough in this area without this cut.

Notwithstanding the popular position Arthur Black holds in our spread out community, we don't want our CBQ station slipping at all! What good would a phone-in program be to us people (in the summer months when we move to our summer homes with no phones). That so-called \$75 million saving will most likely be spent on some cock-eyed stunt that will never benefit the people in the North and all.

Those are some examples of what individuals have said to us. I would point out that copies of this material have been forwarded to the Minister, to the President and to CBC officials as well as to the station itself.

We also received correspondence from the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and from the Centre for Indian Art. The letter reads:

We believe that these cut-backs will affect the quality of public programming in general, and as well, will reduce the opportunities which non-profit groups such as ours will have to inform the public of the Northwest about the many government-financed services which our institution provides for this area.

The Senior Citizens Intergroup Council passed the following resolution:

Whereas: CBQ Radio plays a major role in tying together Northwestern Ontario by attempting to provide local information and programming to all parts of the region, and,

Whereas: recent cut-backs in staff and programs at CBQ Radio will impair the ability of CBQ to fulfill this vital role as the voice of Northwestern Ontario,—

Therefore, they oppose the reduction of service. The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association wrote:

We believe CBQ Radio plays a vital role in bringing together small communities by broadcasting regional news, events and activities. Awareness of the history and uniqueness of Northwestern Ontario is increased through such programs as "The Great Northwest", "Radio Noon" and "The 4 to 6 Show" which features profiles of area personalities, histories of communities and other topics of local and regional interest. These cut-backs will hurt Northwestern Ontario by reducing or eliminating regional content.

The Cambrian Presbytery of the United Church of Canada wrote: