

*The Address—Mr. Irwin*

The French network must accelerate its examination of others such as Champlain or La Verendrye, Alexander Mackenzie, or Banting, or events which have jolted our national history such as Batoche, Lundy's Lane, The Klondike, Leduc, the Plains of Abraham, the Battles of Louisbourg, and Lake George and Champlain.

He states that we must:

Search for younger Francophone writers and directors and those not only in Montreal but throughout all Quebec and other Francophone communities in Canada.

We must embrace, as a government, these positions. The problem that the CBC has is funding. We do not need change the British North America Act to provide that funding. We have the power. What we lack is the will. I suggest that when the CBC budget is up for review we increase it, specifically for the matters I am discussing, as espoused by Mr. Johnson, and that the CBC be directed to do exactly what he has set forth in the document. This is a positive step. This is the frame of mind that will give us a sense of country.

These are general goals of the CBC. In New Brunswick there is a more immediate goal that must be achieved. In Campbellton and Moncton, New Brunswick, many young Acadians have clearly sent us a message. At the moment the French programming in northern New Brunswick comes from Quebec. The Acadians feel that they have a distinct culture of their own. And they are right. They object to more U.S. signals coming into New Brunswick without first addressing their concerns. They feel, and have forcibly said so, that a signal in their own language must emanate, not from Quebec, but from New Brunswick. The CBC agrees and, I understand, is in negotiations with the relevant Carleton station in the Gaspé, and a Moncton entrepreneur. The over-all result could mean original programming emanating from Moncton. That is the way it should be. This is important to the Acadians, and again, this House needs no constitutional change to effect the aspirations of the Acadians.

The funds should be made available to the CBC, again on direction that the job be done. There is a certain irony here. If the provinces had had the control of broadcasting that they appear to want, I am certain that there would be no French CBC services on the basic service in at least three provinces. I am also certain that there would not have been the effort to establish French originating programming in certain provinces and regions that the CBC has attempted to do.

It is the federal government, through the CBC, that has set these goals. Generally these goals have been supported, not only by the government but by all members of this House. We should be proud of those positions, and at the same time press forward through adequate funding. Rhetoric will not solve the problems. The CBC needs the tools.

How do we reach Quebecers? How do we convey our concern? How do we tell them that, as Canadians, they are our brothers? When Gilles Vigneault wrote:

Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver.

I can visualize his country because it is mine too. And when he writes:

Mon jardin ce n'est pas un jardin, c'est la plaine.

I know what he is talking about, as when he writes:

Mon chemin, ce n'est pas un chemin, c'est la neige.

Is there a difference in our homeland in northern Ontario and northern Quebec?

Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver.

I am not ashamed to tell you that the first time I heard this song sung in northern Ontario, I was deeply moved. A Quebecer in four short sentences touched the essence of my country. Vigneault goes on to write:

Ma maison, c'est votre maison.

Well, to Quebecers, northern Ontario is your home too.

Is not the film maker, Claude Jutras, or the painter, Pelland, or the writer, Felix-Antoine Savard, as much a part of Canada as Quebec? Because Gabrielle Roy is from Manitoba, does she not write for all of us when she describes northern Quebec or the Inuit?

I do not understand Mr. Lévesque. I once called him a martyr; I once said he was a patriot, but I no longer understand him. I have tried to, but I cannot. How can one pull out a tooth and grow a new one? How can one sever an arm and replace it? How can an arm sever a head and then say, "See how much better off the body is now that I have my head in my hand?"

We in the federal Parliament do not own Canada. We are merely managers as elected from time to time. We have nothing to give, in the sense that it belongs to us. It does not. What we manage already belongs to all the citizens of Canada, including the citizens of Quebec. If anything is taken, it will only be taken from oneself to give to oneself, not necessarily in the same condition.

I would like to say this, Mr. Speaker:

[Translation]

I want to tell you that for a period of three years I had the privilege of travelling this country from coast to coast with the CRTC. More than ever I am now convinced that without French Canadians there would be no Canada today and I am not referring only to Quebec.

[English]

I am not only talking about Quebec, I am talking about Bathurst, Moncton, Kapuskasing, Sudbury, St. Boniface, and right across this land.

I can only say that within my power as a member of Parliament—

[Translation]

—so long as I am a member of this House, no French Canadian will ever be denied his rights in any province of Canada.

[English]

There will be times when it will be difficult, but it will be done. It must be done. We as Canadians, all of us in this chamber, will do it. And we as Canadians, throughout this abundant land of ours, will endure.