

*Government Orders*

the effect that the programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should be of high standard, using predominantly Canadian creative and other resources. In other words, to meet the letter of the law at the moment, a broadcaster must have predominantly Canadian employees and spend Canadian money.

In Bill C-136 this provision was replaced with the following formulation: "Each element of the Canadian broadcasting system shall contribute in an appropriate manner to the creation and presentation of Canadian programming making maximum use of Canadian creative and other resources". The application of Canadian resources was thus specifically tied to the production of Canadian programming. The word "predominant" was replaced with the word "maximum" clearly indicating that simple predominance would not suffice in circumstances where the broadcaster could do more.

The expression "in an appropriate manner" recognized the emergence of new services such as TV5 which have had as their *raison d'etat* the presentation of a large amount of non-Canadian programming for special audiences. A blanket requirement that all licensees present predominantly Canadian programming would eliminate such services from the Canadian broadcasting system.

Even this stronger wording was improved upon during committee study of Bill C-136 where the paragraph was replaced with the formulation now under consideration. The amended wording now reads: "Each broadcasting undertaking shall make maximum use and in no case less than predominant use of Canadian creative and other resources in the creation and presentation of programming unless the nature of the service provided by the undertaking, such as specialized content or format, or the use of languages other than French or English, renders that use impracticable, in which case the undertaking shall make the greatest practical use of those resources".

The formulation now in the legislation is identical to that passed by this House on September 28, 1988. Under the circumstances it is difficult to understand why one would wish to revert to language which does not compel broadcasters to do as much Canadian programming as possible.

As for the suggestion that a specific reference be included to ensure application of this standard to the presentation of programming in prime viewing hours, the paragraph as worded already encourages such an application. The CRTC is in the business of making regulations detailing the Canadian content requirements in prime time. With respect, Mr. Speaker, I think that is the proper approach.

The legislation sets out the general standard, and the regulator adds a further degree of specificity, taking into account changing industry viewing patterns and so on.

Who is to say that prime time, given sociological change during the life of this bill, might shift as indeed it has shifted in my lifetime. I recall that prime time radio hours were the evening when people would cluster around their radio sets in the family home. I remember that well, and I believe even my colleague from Mount Royal may remember it if she thinks back far enough.

The obligations in this legislation are already much more stringent than those they replace. In my view, the clause we are discussing will do the job it is intended to do, and no further amendments are necessary.

With regard to the amendment on the National Film Board, nothing in the current act or in this bill inhibits the National Film Board from finding broadcast windows for its productions. Indeed, many NFB productions suitable for broadcast have found broadcasters willing to present them.

Currently, NFB documentaries and dramas are often shown, for example, on Vision TV. Moreover, the board has coproduced prime time dramas with the CBC and with other broadcasters.

However, it is important to note that the NFB does not have a broadcasting mandate and is not required to present balanced views in its productions. In actual fact, most NFB productions reflect a strong point of view in the treatment of their subject. That is the nature of documentaries.

While this makes for provocative, stimulating and often award winning films, it does not always make programs suitable for broadcast. Indeed, a common problem that broadcasters have faced in considering NFB productions is the need to find and to set aside equal time for programs with opposing viewpoints.