

Government Orders

we get the private sector in this country producing some quality Canadian programming.

Fifth, provisions dealing with broadcasting in representative aboriginal languages and for multilingual broadcasting are insufficient. We should look at this in the committee.

Sixth, the bill creates a so-called alternate television network. It is quite amazing that this bill creates a whole alternate network. What is this network? What is it to do? What are its responsibilities? It is not given any resource, so I believe it will never come into existence. It is a sham. We might look at that further in committee.

Those are some of the objections I have to the bill on principle and some of the areas in which I think it should be amended.

Let me go into some other details of the flaws. As I said, the bill leads to a North Americanization, especially in television, of our broadcasting. The government rejected two key amendments by the New Democratic Party that would say to American superstations on television, new stations if you like, that those stations could only come into Canada if they were complimentary to Canadian stations.

Let me explain that. They have to add something. If Canadian stations such as an entertainment network or an all news network already existed, then the American stations could not come in. That would require legislation protecting Canadian culture. This government will not do it because it is afraid of the Americans. It has a trade deal and it is afraid to do it.

I am not talking about ABC, CBS, NBC or the American public stations or the border stations. I am talking about these new superchannels which I believe could possibly run right over Canadian broadcasters and could in fact put a lot of our private broadcasters right out of business because I do not think our private broadcasters can compete with them. This is not a level playing field. I believe that is one of the flaws in the bill.

I asked the minister why the government did not accept these amendments. I believe the government is hemmed in by the trade deal, by its unwillingness to interfere with American industries, even cultural industries coming into Canada.

The second flaw in the bill was the cable industry being treated too well. I mentioned the right to originate programming. This was in opposition to all previous reports, especially the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, and to many of the witnesses that came before it. The cable industry has a real in with this government. I do not know what it is, but it must have a good lobby. It has certainly been protected in this bill. I wish my Liberal friends would look at that more seriously and not support the cable industry so absolutely in this area.

Another aspect that we have to look at in the cable industry, and we have to face this, is whether we are going to regulate cable fees. The telephone industry is regulated but cable is not. We are going to have one fibre optic line going into a household in the future, into a phone, into a TV or whatever, and we are going to have to come to grips with that. In some aspects, ironically, this bill is already out of date in many ways technologically before it has even come in because technology is moving so quickly. We have to deal with whether or not we are going to regulate the profits of the cable industry. I think we should.

I mentioned the underfunding of the CBC. I want to quote from a distinguished writer from Southam's, Jamie Portman, who follows this area constantly and is one of the best writers of it. He wrote in *The Spectator*: of Hamilton:

The government has ignored a recent call from an all-party Commons committee that it show its commitment to better Canadian programming by increasing its support of broadcasting by up to \$250 million—

That is what Conservative members on that committee said.

—in fresh funding annually—in real dollar terms, the CBC's budget has shrunk by more than \$150 million since the Conservatives came to power.

• (1430)

I will not stay on this. The fact is if you want the public sector to work, you have to fund it. You can have all these wonderful expressions, but if you keep cutting back the CBC dramatically like this, what you are going to see is commercials on *The National*. You are eventually going to see commercials with changes on the radio. You are going to see cut-backs in regional programming, which I think will be a real disaster. Do you remember what I said about Karl Deutsch saying that Canadians have to