

...We have to come to grips with the fact that never in this country have we solved the problem of building nation-wide systems of cultural communications. — Susan Crean, Chair, Writers' Union of Canada (Issue 13:6, 7).

Telecommunications — Canada's Electronic Railroad of the 1990s

The Committee recognizes the essential and increasing role being played by our telecommunications system as a key social and economic link among Canadians in all regions. Telecommunications provides the means for Canadians to share the idea — and the ideal — of a common Canadian home that stretches from coast to coast to coast. By shrinking the distances between us, our telecommunications system plays an important role by helping to build awareness among all Canadians about the values we share as a nation and the ideas we have in common. This is true no matter the function — data, voice and video distribution through wire lines, fibre optic, microwave, satellite or radio facilities. Together they form a seamless web, a national communications network that not only links Canadians to each other, but to the world.

Representatives of the telecommunications industry were also forthcoming in their sense of public commitment in support of national unity:

Telecommunications is, in a very real sense, the means of bringing Canadians together, and perhaps the most important vehicle for sharing what makes up our identity. — AGT Limited, Brief, p. 2.

At this critical time in Canada's history, information technology can also strengthen our national identity, bringing Canadians at a distance closer together and allowing broad participation in the renewal process. — Jocelyne Côté-O'Hara, Vice-President, Government Relations, British Columbia Telephone Company (Issue 28:50).

A shared Canadian identity needs enabling communications. In a sense, national unity is nothing but about communicating. Telecommunication is the medium that moves the messages and, as our late Marshall McLuhan observed, it is also becoming the message. — George Horhota, President, Canadian Business Telecommunications Alliance (Issue 23:6).

The company is more than willing... to assist in bringing the power of television to bear on the promotion of Canadian unity. — Eldon Thompson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Telesat Canada (Issue 10:31).

1E. DIVERSITY: THE COMMON GROUND

The common ground is diversity. This holds true whether we are describing our geography or our culture. From the first significant brush stroke on an empty white canvas, the defiant acceptance of our human frailty in the face of our vast