

### INTRODUCTION: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADIAN UNITY

In June of 1991, our Committee decided to conduct a study on "*the implications of culture and communications for Canadian unity*", and we began a schedule of hearings in early October. Among a total of 46 witnesses, we heard from leading agencies and organizations in Canada's culture and communications sectors, as well as from ministers and officials in relevant government departments. A number of others made written submissions, and some individuals appeared before us in person. Overall, by mid-December we had conducted a comprehensive schedule of hearings and received an extensive record of informed opinion about the subject matter of our study. In so doing, we also gained a broad overview of the main policy issues affecting culture and communications in Canada, particularly with respect to the roles and responsibilities of the federal government.

This study was initiated because the members of our Committee believe that both culture and communications are unique and compelling subject areas with respect to the constitutional renewal of Canada. In fact, as one of our witnesses stated, we believe that the constitutional issue is as much *cultural* as it is *political*. In addition, we had received indications that a significant number of individuals, agencies and organizations in the culture and communications sectors had not been provided a focused opportunity to present their views about the future of the country. Our Standing Committee seemed a most appropriate forum for this. While stressing that our efforts would be designed entirely to complement the work of the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada, and not in any way to pre-empt or conflict with it, we issued an invitation for submissions throughout the cultural and communications sectors, accompanied by four questions which indicated the focus of our study. This questionnaire, which conveys our terms of reference, is included as Appendix A to this report.

Our Committee met 50 times on the unity issue, consuming more than 118 hours of debate and consideration.

Because we were fortunate to receive compelling testimony from a broad cross-section of cultural and communications interests in Canada, and because of the complex and sensitive nature of the constitutional issues before us, we have chosen to use the words of our witnesses themselves wherever possible to support our text. As a thorough reading of the report will show, the quotations which we have selected are relevant and revealing. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to all of the individuals and groups who appeared before us, sometimes on very short notice, and to thank them for the excellent substance and style of their presentations. We trust they will find that we have reflected their representations in both a considered and considerate manner.

Our Committee was also fortunate to have the services of dedicated and competent staff, particularly in the persons of Mr. Timothy R. Wilson, our Clerk, and two research officials, Mr. René Lemieux from the Library of Parliament, and Mr. John Thera, who was seconded