

Revenue Canada Taxation, as it has in the past, will doubtless argue that by structuring a portion of the tax régime in recognition of the particular nature of the arts and the cultural industries, then one is according special treatment. This is a semantic quibble, but if that is their view then so be it. If, in order to achieve fairness and justice, certain modifications need be made that are not accorded other sectors, then this is no more nor less than the specific treatment designed to accomodate the realities of commerce and banking, oil and gas, farming, fishing, small- or large-scale manufacturing, and the host of other important endeavours that comprise the sectors of our economy.

Failure to address the specific and identifiable characteristics of the arts and artists in the design and application of the tax régime can only lead to greater and greater problems, and fewer and fewer of the cultural and economic benefits which derive from vigorous artistic activity. Artists are artists, and the arts the arts, and the persistence in treating them as something else for tax purposes must end.

CONCLUSION

If Canada is to enjoy a healthy cultural life, then the arts and artists can no longer be subjected to inappropriate and punitive tax treatment, and the federal tax régime can no longer be permitted to impede the realization of federal cultural objectives.

In order to put an end to a painful chapter in Canada's cultural history, a moratorium must first be put in effect in order to halt the destruction experienced of late. This must be followed quickly by the prompt resolution of problems identified in the Disney Report and of those which have arisen since that document was published. When this has been achieved, we must then restructure the tax régime in recognition of the characteristics and benefits of the cultural sector and in order that the arts and the cultural industries, and the individuals who pursue careers in this sector, may flourish to the benefit of all Canadians.

The Canadian Conference of the Arts would welcome the opportunity of appearing before the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture in order to speak to these important issues. You, the Chairman and members of the Standing Committee, may be assured of the full support and cooperation of the CCA in resolving the critical tax problems affecting the cultural community, and should feel free to call upon us if the CCA can be of assistance to you in the course of your review. Much hangs in the balance, and the CCA will collaborate with you fully in order to achieve much-needed and long-overdue change to the manner in which the arts and artists are treated for tax purposes in Canada.