

Multiculturalism does not mean celebrating the fact that we are different from each other and have differences, but rather celebrating the fact that we can be comfortable with our difference and yet live together in a harmonious manner. — Canadian Ethnocultural Council, Brief, p. 6.

Noting the profound cultural distinctions within Canada, it is appropriate to remind ourselves of one particular principle on which current constitutional proposals are based:

Being Canadian does not require that we all be alike. Around a core set of shared values, Canadian citizenship accommodates a respect for diversity that enriches us all. — Shaping Canada's Future Together: Proposals, p. 1, 1991.

1D. COMMUNICATIONS: THE CULTURAL CONNECTION

We are a vehicle for Canadians to express, celebrate and communicate the hopes, aspirations and accomplishments of Canadians, to Canadians. We facilitate, in the best sense of the word, the sharing of the Canadian identity. Over one hundred years ago, this country was bound together by ribbons of steel, but in our technological age, it is programming transmitted by wires, fibres and satellites that binds the fabric of Canadians from coast to coast. — Ken Stein, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Cable Television Association (Issue 20:34).

In its discussion of communications, the Committee is very much aware that a distinction should be made between *programming content* (on television, radio and cable television, and in books, magazines, newspapers, films, video, sound recordings, museums, archives and libraries), and the means of its *transmission*. In any country, but particularly in so vast a land as Canada, delivery of the cultural message is every bit as vital as the creation of it.

In fact, in many circumstances, *the cultural message is both created and delivered* by Canada's communications systems. It is in the pursuit of *programming excellence*, for example, that such national institutions as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Arts Centre and the National Film Board serve Canada by both creating and delivering cultural content.

... we've demonstrated here that the quality is there... — among Canadian artists... that the development of many of those skills owes a tremendous amount to the work of CBC/Radio Canada over the years. ... there probably would be very few symphony orchestras, for example, in this country... without the support to music that the CBC has provided over the years. — Patrick Watson, Chairman, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Issue 12:18).

It is in this context, in both private and public organizations, that the real investment must be made to encourage Canadian cultural excellence. Here too, public policies and a continued strong national presence in broadcasting and telecommunications are needed to ensure the distribution of Canadian content to Canadians.