

*Government Orders*

must have a means or several means of distribution, of conveyance, of duplication, of inculcation of that culture.

It is in this regard that we are in grave peril in Canada. We are on the verge of losing, perhaps finally, our history, our cultural memory of who, what, and for what we are. This is because we have failed to retain national control over our principal means of cultural transmission which in our modern age have got to be seen, first, as television but as well must include things like books, films, newspapers and other such means of mass communications, because it is through mass communication that we transmit to ourselves our images, our ideas, our understanding of who and what we are. It is through such mass communication means that we retain our memory.

• (1320)

Examples abound of recent and not so recent alienation of these means of communication in Canada. As we know, prior to the last election under the leadership of Flora MacDonald the department which she headed was preparing to bring forward a bill that would have the effect of loosening the 97 per cent stranglehold the Americans now have on our film distribution industry.

It is pointless to speculate here but, for whatever reason, that legislation was abandoned. It seems none other will be brought forward to take its place and in consequence that American stranglehold of one of those most vital aspects of our culture will remain and perhaps deepen, although I cannot imagine they would be too anxious to scramble up the last 3 per cent when they have the 97 per cent.

This has implications, coupled with the ongoing overwhelming American content of our television broadcast media, for all sorts of Canadian means of cultural communication, even those areas in which there is unquestionably at the moment a vital, alive, thriving Canadian cultural community.

I think especially, for example, of live theatre and, to a lesser degree, Canadian film production—not distribution, but production. In terms of live theatre I think of the incredible array of new plays created and produced in Edmonton, my own town, every year and, indeed, exported across this country. Theatres from St. John's to

Victoria are hosting plays written and originally produced in Edmonton.

I think as well of film works such as the works of Ann Wheeler from Alberta, her most recent hit, *Bye Bye Blues*, being a stirring example. There is no question that the cultural product is there. Ken Brown's *Life After Hockey*, from Edmonton, is an example. The attempt to maintain and, indeed, enlarge upon the Canadian memory is there and is thriving.

What is lacking is the means of conveying that memory and the expression of that memory to the broad majority of Canadian people. Those avenues are cut off in film distribution and increasingly those avenues are cut off in television broadcasting. That is where the great problem lies. I do not think anyone will argue this point.

The private sector has failed dismally to advance the cause of the dissemination, the growth, the maintenance of Canadian culture and, again, I do not mean song and dance. I mean Canadian culture in the sense of what we understand it is to be Canadian, how we dream of ourselves when we dream. Because the private sector has failed miserably, we must absolutely maintain a strong, effective, wildly dispersed public sector role in culture conveyance in this country.

The Caplan-Sauvageau committee put it very succinctly and very well in their report when they noted: "The reasons for this problem"—the problem being the lack of access to Canadian cultural markets by Canadian cultural producers—"are clear. The public sector, which must be the chief purveyor of quality Canadian programming, is inadequately scaled and funded. The private sector which should complement the public sector is not doing its job".

That is very clear, very straightforward, very correct. Instead of heeding this fundamental Canadian wisdom the government is in this bill creating a so-called alternative television network, a whole new alternate network without, when the bill was introduced, specifying what that network might be, without assigning any resources to it, without, indeed, describing it in any fashion by which we might come to judge it.

Perhaps this is intimately connected to the events which occurred yesterday. Mr. Izzy Asper finally, after years of struggle with his erstwhile partners, achieved effective control over the Global Television empire in Canada, an empire which has a great deal of growth