

*Adjournment Debate*

The cutbacks at Sydney have affected us in an extremely negative way. Not only will individuals be losing their jobs—and I want to speak specifically to that in a moment—but it also precludes us as a people on the Island of Cape Breton from communicating in a profoundly effective way with other citizens of this great country. But little ought not to be made, in fact a great deal ought to be made, of those individuals who will be displaced by the Government of Canada's decision to cut CBC by \$110 million. These are employees, most of which are with NABET, the National Association of Broadcasters, Employees and Technicians, who are going to be losing their jobs. Those of us in Atlantic Canada who have seen the erosion of VIA Rail, the massive cutbacks with regards to Air Canada, the gutting of the Atlantic fisheries and the over-all massive erosion of medicare and now another national institution is waning in the wind.

It is not overly appealing for the major centres of this country to learn that such far off places as Sydney, Nova Scotia next to my constituency and/or Corner Brook or Sept-Îles or Rimouski are losing their stations.

It must be said, Mr. Speaker, that what we are doing at a time when national unity has never been as important as it is today, we are helping to foster a belief in a view from coast to coast that the government is not really concerned about national unity. Because if it was, it would not be cutting away at those very same national institutions which foster unity in this country.

I would hope that the parliamentary secretary could rise in her place this afternoon and explain to my constituents why those individuals who were employed with CBC Sydney have lost their jobs; why the people in that community of a population of over 130,000 are without the facilities of the CBC. Yes, they have some reporting mechanisms to have a few news stories out, but it is entirely different from the way it was.

I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, if the parliamentary secretary could be candid enough to tell us the true reasons why the government has fingered this particular institutions in my riding for closure.

**Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the member for Cape Breton—East Richmond and I am glad to dispel some of the confusion he obviously has over the CBC.

All hon. members recognize the importance of our national broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in providing services from one coast to the other. I know that many Canadians were concerned by the December announcement of the CBC. The restructuring measures that they announced were approved by the CBC board of directors in an effort to bring the services they provide in line with what is available in terms of resources.

This decision was taken in order to avoid operating in a deficit in the coming year. The board's decision was acknowledged generally as being fiscally responsible. And I believe it is important at the outset to stress to the hon. member that no transmitter, whether it be radio or television, is going off the air. All of the more than 1,600 transmitters owned and operated by the corporation will continue to serve Canadians, including those from Sydney.

Radio continues to be deeply rooted in all the regions of Canada and it continues to provide service at the local, regional and national levels. This is as true in Sydney as anywhere else, and I am assured that CBI-Radio in Sydney continues to provide all the local programs which existed before this restructuring announcement.

Television complements radio. It has withdrawn from programming intended for purely local audiences to concentrate on regional, national and international programming; in fact, to deal with that very issue of unity that the hon. member has mentioned.

This means that in Sydney as in other Canadian centres, the local productions have been replaced by strengthened regional programming. CBC continues to operate a local news bureau in Sydney and to assure local news stories are part of the strengthened regional news casts.

It is instructive to note, Mr. Speaker, that CBC's total planned resources for 1991-92 amount to \$1.4 billion. These resources consist of parliamentary appropriations and revenues. Since 1984 the CBC has been allowed to retain in full the revenues it generates from advertising, and these revenues are projected to amount to \$354 million for the next fiscal year.

Despite budgetary restraint, the Government of Canada has injected more than \$645 million in new funds into the CBC's budget since 1984. This is over and above increases for salaries and other unavoidable operating costs. As a result, the corporation's total resources have