

Government Orders

Mr. Lapierre: He said: "Weaken Canada". I say to the hon. member that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation would have no credibility if it were to become a propaganda tool. I am surprised these members show so little respect for the intelligence of the audience.

Mr. Speaker, you yourself were once a dynamic element of Radio-Canada, and I am sure you would never have wanted to become a propaganda tool. This particular clause in the Act could be interpreted very narrowly. If tomorrow morning, the hon. member for Mount Royal became minister of Communications, I predict she would immediately tell the president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation about his obligation to promote national unity. And in any referendum we might have in Quebec, for instance, Radio-Canada would play a proactive role that would have no connection with the neutral and objective information gathering to which Radio-Canada has always been dedicated.

The hon. member said earlier that we did not talk enough about federalism, that not enough people were talking about it. The problem isn't Radio-Canada. The problem is that the hon. member can find no credible spokespersons for her option in Quebec today. Only her leader, on his occasional visits to Quebec, mumbles a few words about old-fashioned federalism. But we shouldn't blame Radio-Canada.

What we must realize is that there are no more credible Francophone spokespersons for the option they want to suggest, no one who is prepared to serve their cause, and that is true across the province. When I see this abdication reason and common sense, these demands for a propaganda mandate for a Crown corporation, I can tell them it won't work. Quebecers didn't give Radio-Quebec a mandate to work for Quebec's sovereignty. In fact, the first people to object would have been the hon. member for Mount Royal and all her friends in the Equality Party. They would immediately draw parallels with the Nazis or whatever. We have heard those speeches before.

Why do they want to make Radio-Canada do something they would not approve in the case of Radio-Quebec? When the Parti quebecois was in power in Quebec City, for instance, did they tell Radio-Quebec: Now you are going to pursue the same objectives as the government? Never, Mr. Speaker! They had too much respect for freedom of the press.

When I heard the hon. member for Mount Royal say that the leader of her party said a country's purpose in life was to survive, I thought I never heard such a stupid statement. A country's purpose in life, Mr. Speaker, is to share what we have and to establish common institutions. Survival is not enough. When I hear them saying this sort of thing, I am not surprised they have dropped substantially in the polls. They just want to survive, but we want more than just survive, we want to live! To that extent I believe that the definition she wants to give to the CBC again underlies the weakness of their arguments.

Mr. Speaker, they say that the CBC should develop a common vision of the future, but who will do that? The hon. member for Mount Royal, or perhaps the hon. member for Vancouver? Will it be Clyde Wells, Mr. Speaker? Can you imagine Clyde Wells being the CBC president tomorrow morning? What kind of propaganda outlet would it become?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lapierre: I see the Liberal members applauding. I can appreciate that, Mr. Speaker, because they may already be looking for a new leader and Clyde Wells seems to be giving a much better performance than their present leader. Even so, Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to promote him.

When I hear the kind of statements Clyde Wells has just made, suggesting that the Bélanger-Campeau Commission is illegitimate, can you imagine what it would be like if he were president of the CBC! He would ban all news concerning the B-C Commission. When he states that the future of the country lies in the Senate, it speaks volumes for intelligence and democracy! You know, Clyde Wells is the one who is called— In fact he is the Premier of Newfoundland, the man with great ambitions. He is learning French not only to be able to speak on the CBC English network, but now he also wants to speak in French on Radio-Canada!

Mr. Waddell: He is not a New Democrat.

• (1540)

Mr. Lapierre: He is not NDP, but NDPs are worse, Mr. Speaker.

The point I wish to make is that instead of asking the CBC to do the job for them, they should offer true alternatives to Quebecers. I respect their determination to promote federalism and Canadian unity. I tell them