

*Government Orders*

There are two kinds of contributions that they make. We have talked a bit about the cultural contribution. Those creative people, playwrights, artisans, crafts people, directors, choreographers, film makers, the producers of radio programs and on and on, all of the different creative arts that we are fortunate to have in this country, also create jobs. If they were paid what they were worth, if they were paid even close to what they were worth, they would be expanding the tax base in this country as well. It is in the best interest of all of us to see that their financial situation is improved and augmented in the best way we possibly can.

It used to be, again in the European tradition, that wealthy individuals would sponsor certain artists. It is doubtful we would have the great treasures of Michelangelo were it not for the Medici. It is doubtful that we would have the writings of Shakespeare were it not for the patronage of the Earl of Surrey. It is doubtful whether we would have many of the great works of art, literature and music that form the basis of the cultural of western civilization, were it not for the patronage of the wealthy. There still is a role for that to a degree. That is why we see private foundations and private donations to the arts. There is a place for that. However, in the modern nation state that is Canada the major benefactor for the arts, to ensure that the arts develop in line with the national vision that we are defining and redefining every day as we speak, has to be the government.

The government has a responsibility to be the Medici of the latter part of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st in Canada.

The government has to set the policy and the standard. Otherwise, the regional pulls, the various cultural pulls might create an imbalance and we do not want an imbalance. We want to see a sense of fairness and we want to see the continuation of the vertical mosaic, not the melting pot that is Canada.

These contributions are what enable us to define and distinguish ourselves as a nation different from and unique among other nations. We must provide an adequate network of support which would be an enabling factor in the improvement of the socioeconomic status of the artist.

We know that the cultural sector has been weakened, and weakened severely, by the free trade agreement. Although I believe that every member of this House firmly believes that culture should not be on the table in

the new round of free trade talks between Canada, the United States and Mexico, does anyone seriously believe that if Carla Hills, the American trade representative, says it is on the table Canada is not going to have to discuss it, at the very least, at some point? The scales have to fall from the eyes of hon. members on the government side. Ms. Hills is not to be trifled with. If she says she is going to talk about it I think she is going to talk about it.

While I am delighted to hear the protestations of the Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Communications, the Prime Minister and other members of government that culture is not on the table it is going to take more than mere words to protect Canada's cultural industries and Canada's cultural creators from that massive cultural machine to the south of us.

As we sit on our side of the longest undefended border in the world, we know that on every television set in this country and on every radio station we are inundated with American television programs and American music, we are inundated with American literature, American motion pictures, American newspapers, American magazines, and so on and so on.

Amazingly in spite of this, Canadian cultural industries and Canadian creators and artists have managed to survive and even thrive in what has not been a garden adequately watered.

I remember as a child delighting in the few Canadian productions I used to see on the fledgling CBC. I remember when television first came, at least when it first came to Cape Breton Island, and I remember watching a Canadian Howdy Doody instead of an American Howdy Doody. I remember watching Robin MacNeil, now a co-host of the MacNeil-Lehrer Report on public broadcasting in the United States, do a wonderful program for children out of CBC Ottawa called: "Let's Go to the Museum". I remember watching puppet shows that were Canadian, produced in Montreal. I remember watching a librarian from Toronto, whose name I believe was Beth Gilanders, on a show called *Hidden Pages* on early television get Canadian children interested in going to libraries. All of these things were wonderful and we have always done reasonably well in cultural endeavours relating to children. We give ourselves a good start but then there is this vast wasteland in between. That wasteland begins at the age when children become teenagers and start to develop their own interests in cultural matters.