

*Business of the House***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE***[English]*

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, if I may reiterate the agreement of last week, it is the Government's intention to resume debate on Bill C-136. In accordance with the agreement, that debate will terminate at or before one o'clock. I would just like to point out that the Government has no intention of calling any further business before one o'clock and we will call it one o'clock once the debate on that Bill is finalized.

At three o'clock, after Question Period, the Government will call third reading of Bill C-82. I understand that there is no Private Members' Business today, so once the debate on Bill C-82 has terminated we would call it six o'clock and the deferred division on Bill C-82 and any deferred division on Bill C-136 would take place at that time.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the understanding. Is there agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***BROADCASTING ACT**

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed, from Tuesday, July 19, consideration of the motion of Miss MacDonald that Bill C-136, an Act respecting broadcasting and to amend certain Acts in relation thereto and in relation to radiocommunication, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, the broadcasting Bill before us today gives us an opportunity to look at the state of broadcasting in Canada. Broadcasting is very important to Canadian culture. Watching television is a major form of recreation for Canadians from coast to coast as, of course, is listening to radio. People spend many hours a day watching television and it is said that children spend more hours before the television set than they do at school. Therefore, the type of material which is sent out to Canadians on our public airwaves is extremely significant.

Unfortunately, the Bill before us today is a step backward in the evolution of our broadcasting system. It is a great disappointment. There are some good things in the Bill but it is a severely flawed Bill. My list of congratulations is comparatively short and my disappointments comparatively long and relate to the most significant items.

We do not legislate in the area of broadcasting very often, only about every 20 years. Therefore, the fact that the Minister has missed the opportunity to bring in a good Bill is doubly disappointing. It is even more so since the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture gave a great deal of attention to the issue of broadcasting. We had an excellent

task force report. The Caplan-Sauvageau report was thorough, comprehensive, detailed and exciting. That task force held hearings all across the country. It listened to Canadians and came up with a dynamic report.

Our committee studied that report and held hearings again to listen to Canadian consumers of broadcasting as participants, directors, performers, and broadcasters, private and public. All sectors of the system spoke to us and we listened carefully. Our report on changes in broadcasting contains some very good items, many of which did not make it into legislation.

Moreover, the Minister has tried to give the impression that this is a step forward and will result in more Canadianization. That, however, is not the case. There will be less. The standards required for Canadianization are going down. It is of what we do not see in the Bill and the slight changes in wording that we have to be most careful because that is how this deceptive act has been performed. They are small changes in terms of the number of words but critical changes in terms of the standards we set for the use of the public airwaves.

For both the private and public sectors in broadcasting there has been a diminution. We are not aiming as high as we could. Standards previously set, although not reached, are not even being set. One of the jokes that went along with the Caplan-Sauvageau report was that rather than making recommendations for a new Broadcasting Act the committee should recommend the re-legislation of the old Broadcasting Act with the added clause, "This time we mean it". Well, the Minister did not take that advice and this time she is not aiming even as high as the 1968 Broadcasting Act.

With regard to the requirements for Canadianization, Clause 3.1(d) says:

—each element of the Canadian broadcasting system shall contribute in an appropriate manner to the creation and presentation of Canadian programming, making maximum use of Canadian creative and other resources;

We know that in the case of private broadcasting "making maximum use" has been paltry indeed. They are making enormous profits yet not contributing their fair share. Our committee said that in no uncertain terms and pointed out, as had the Caplan-Sauvageau report, the extensive profits and the availability which existed for Canadian programming. The Minister does not require that at all. Consistent with the financial and other resources available to private networks and programming undertakings they are supposed to, as indicated in Clause 3.1(p)(i):

—contribute significantly to the creation and presentation of Canadian programming—

How much is "significantly"? They will tell you that it does not have to be very much at all because Canadians do not like Canadian programming. They do not have to be predominantly Canadian as was the requirement under the old Act. The 1968 Act said that the CBC should be predominantly Canadian, and private broadcasters at least had to be predominantly Canadian in their creative and other resources. The CRTC