

The motion put forward by the Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) suggests that our Government is cutting funding to cultural agencies and leaving artists in poverty. That is based on the assumption that we may be throwing out the bath water and leaving the baby struggling to survive. Well, if one wanted to agree with that assumption, one would have to assume that the baby, the Canadian cultural community, is healthy in the first place, and I submit that it is not.

In my earlier intervention this morning, I mentioned that we in Canada spend more on culture per capital than the British and Americans combined. What is the result? A strong publishing industry with a gallery of artists of international renown? A thriving motion picture industry which dramatically reflects our nation's identity? Plays and poems and artists who can stand on their own? Or simply survive on the Government teat, continually demanding more and more money just to survive?

The situation is ridiculous. We have to send 40 CBC employees to the Cannes Film Festival to peddle our cultural product. That tells you a lot about the quality of that product. I submit that the world film community would come to us if we simply produced a better product.

In my view, the reality of restraint gives us a unique opportunity to address afresh, systematically and creatively, the issues which face us in the broad arenas of communications and culture. As a fiscally responsible Government we cannot afford to throw money at the problems. It did not work in the past and it will not work now. Most important of all, we owe it to the people of Canada to give them value for their tax dollars. You do not necessarily produce a better product by throwing more taxpayers' dollars at the cultural community of this nation.

Right now in Vancouver, British Columbia, a movie called "Rocky IV" is being produced. They have recreated Russia in the PNE AgriDome. There is absolutely nothing Canadian about that production except for the fact they are throwing a few dollars our way. It is a ridiculous situation. How many times have we seen a Canadian film or television program where they change even the licence plates on the automobiles so that the poor viewer does not confuse Vancouver or Toronto with New York or Los Angeles? Our theatres are owned and controlled by Americans showing excellent films which are not Canadian.

We had our chance to change that 40 years ago. The Liberal Government of Mackenzie King saw the problem and decided to act. It wanted to restrict the number of American movies which were coming into our nation, and try and build up, in the National Film Board, our own national film industry. But they were wined and dined by the Hollywood moguls and the decision which was eventually arrived at was if Gary Cooper or Jimmy Stewart every now and then mentioned Canadian geese in a western flick, then it was all right and the film could be shown in Canada. We sold ourselves short. We sold our National Film Board short and we sold our artists short as well. That was a watershed in Canadian culture, the

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1940s, and that was when the bath water and the baby were thrown out, in my opinion.

So we have a 2.9 per cent cut in funding to Canadian cultural agencies, and Pierre Berton is going to starve. That is absolute nonsense, Mr. Speaker. The real shame, the real crime, is that we have so many good stories to tell and we are not telling them. The intense drama and tension of the life of Louis Riel; the incredible discoveries of Simon Fraser, David Thompson and Alexander Mackenzie; the saga of our Indian peoples, or the miracle of Steven Fonyo's run. From the struggles of our forefathers to create this nation, to the high level adventures of an astronaut, our first astronaut being Marc Garneau, we have so much to share with each other and we are just not doing it through Canadian cultural activities.

The lack of a distinctive Canadian culture is particularly evident, as my friend the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) mentioned earlier, in English Canada where I come from. English Canada is threatened, and it is a real threat, with inundation by American culture. The simple and straightforward solution is to cut along the 49th Parallel and float away. Or we could jam the skies and keep out those alien satellite signals which are inundating our homes in Canada. The most difficult solution for us as a government and people is to create some sort of incubation system to help our artists along, to learn from the best and to create the best. I do not care if you call the agency Culture Canada or the National Film Board or the Canadian Identity Agency, but what we have been doing up till now has not been working and we have to change the mechanism. We have to involve the public and private sector and the artists of Canada in order to produce a better product.

Let us acknowledge right here that the *Beachcombers* cannot compete with *Dallas*, so let us not try to compete dollar for dollar. Let us try and do what we do well: animation, documentaries, television drama. We cannot compete with American or British productions dollar for dollar. Therefore we should try to find a way to tell our story well and not prop up an inferior product with more and more money that has to be borrowed in the first place.

● (1530)

Time is critically important. The skies are full of satellite signals that are entertaining and informing Canadians. They are entertaining and informing my children and others. But the majority of those signals are not mirroring the interests, the concerns or the desires of our fellow Canadians.

As the mover of this motion stated earlier, we have artistic palaces all over the country while our artistic community struggles to survive. Therefore, I suggest that we must change the delivery system. That is why our Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) has criss-crossed the nation to learn the best way to bring about change. The same kind of Conservative Government that created the CBC is now going to initiate a new mandate for the Canadian cultural community.

It will not do so at any cost. It is not doing it in the old way by throwing money in the hope that it will stick somewhere.