

Government Orders

Broadcasting Corporation will survive as one of the finest corporations in the world. I applaud whatever the CBC can do and I know it will survive, cuts or no cuts.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): I compliment the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth on his sentiment. I just wish that I could believe that it will be followed through. I, too, am a long-time fan of the CBC, but I have great fear for its future. I also say to both the parliamentary secretary and the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth, if the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth has his ear to the ground, his shoulder to the wheel and his nose to the grindstone, he may soon need the services of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier who, as you know, is a chiropractor. I want to talk about my sorrow at this bill and the fact that this debate is winding to its close on an issue of such incredible importance to all Canadians.

• (2030)

I have spoken several times on this bill, at the amendment stage, at second reading, and so on. I keep coming back to the question of the national unity mandate in the Broadcasting Act and national unity as a mandate for the CBC.

The first example that comes to mind is the question of two standing committees of the board of directors of the CBC: one in French and one in English. Why? With all of the difficulties we are experiencing in this country in understanding each other, why should our government legislate to make that understanding even more difficult? Why are we institutionalizing a particularly Canadian kind of apartheid within the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and doing it at the behest of government? It is insanity. It is unacceptable, and Canadians do not want to see it.

The kind of cutbacks that we are looking at can result in the cancellation of the parliamentary channel. The cutbacks that are being reported by *NewsWorld*, the cutbacks that are being reported by *The World at Six*—

Mr. Edwards: That is false.

Ms. Clancy: False, you tell me they are false? Perhaps the hon. parliamentary secretary can stand in this House and tell me that Radio Canada International is safe. Perhaps he can tell me that the parliamentary channel is safe and, most particularly, perhaps he can tell me that regional stations such as Charlottetown, Sydney, Yellowknife, western stations and Inuvik are safe. I do not mean just safe until tomorrow. I do not mean just safe until Christmas Eve or until old Christmas Day in January.

This is not some twelfth night safety we are looking at. We want to know that they are safe in some form of perpetuity. Safe is not safe for two weeks. We want to know they are safe. The parliamentary secretary will get his chance. We want to know that they are safe, and I will talk more about the dangers to regional programming.

Ms. Blondin: Blame the CBC.

Ms. Clancy: Yes, blame the CBC. Here we go with the old arm's length again.

According to clause 31(m) of this bill, programming provided by the CBC is supposed to reflect Canada and its regions. We will no doubt hear from the parliamentary secretary during questions and comments. I look forward to that with great alacrity. However, tonight Canadians heard via the CBC, via *NewsWorld* on television and *The Word at Six* on radio, that there was a very strong rumour that 10 regional stations were going to be cut.

Those of us in the Atlantic have a paranoia about this government. I use the word paranoia perhaps advisedly, because it is a well-known saying in Atlantic Canada that just because you are paranoid does not mean they are not out to get you. We have discovered that, to our sorrow.

Mr. Edwards: Try western Canada.

Ms. Clancy: Western Canada. If the gentleman opposite would care to come and spend some time in Atlantic Canada, he would know what true hardship is. I love western Canada and I greatly admire members from western Canada but, believe me, we can show the problems that government neglect or, God forbid, direct government action against you can do to your economy and to your faith in what government is supposed to do.

I want to talk about what could happen in Atlantic Canada. I will give one example. What if Sydney is cut? Sydney on Cape Breton Island, the home of my ancestors, the place where I first learned to listen to CBC radio as a small child. One of the things that comes out of CBI in Sydney is Celtic programming, part of the regional reflection provided by the CBC. A certain number of hours per week has contributed quite significantly to the Celtic revival on Cape Breton Island. Indeed, more people on Cape Breton speak the Gaelic than speak it in Scotland where it originated. It was carried on by oral tradition down through the generations and then with the help of the CBC and St. Francis Xavier University and the University College of Cape Breton, the language has been revived and brought back.