

*Supply*

Madam Speaker, intolerance and prejudice in any society, including ours, must be condemned. In addition, we must ensure that they are not allowed to feed on our society. Intolerance and prejudice are only the result of our ignorance. For us, as Canadian people, these are some of the reasons why this government has put so much emphasis on programs supporting our creative talents and promoting our cultural heritage, thus helping to enhance our Canadian identity.

[English]

Madam Speaker, the government's total cultural envelope is in the area of \$2.4 billion this year, covering several departments and ministries, including the Department of Communications, and, among others, the Secretary of State and the several relevant programs, notably, multiculturalism and the Department of Employment and Immigration.

The Minister of Communications has stated many times in this House that a nation without artists is one without identity. The minister has long recognized the important role that writers, painters, mimes, actors and actresses, comedians, singers, journalists and broadcasters, among others, have played to help us to communicate with each other.

Through these talented mediums, we understand our common bonds, our history, our shared passions, secrets, likes and dislikes, our ambitions for ourselves and for our families, now and tomorrow.

Innovative and well funded programs coming under the aegis of the Department of Communications and the cultural agencies have provided encouragement and support to these artists and to the cultural industries they depend on to disseminate their messages, the publishing industry, the sound recording industry, the performing arts, cultural centres and museums, ballet and theatre companies, and probably the most potent educational force of this century, broadcasting.

Indeed, this House has before it now a wide-ranging bill respecting broadcasting. This bill, tabled in the House by the minister last October 12, has since progressed through second reading and is now before a legislative committee of this House.

• (1350)

Fundamental to the new bill is the notion that the Canadian broadcasting system is important to Canada and to all Canadians for the very reason that it has served and will continue to serve even more effectively to introduce Canadians of all backgrounds, creeds and customs to each other in what is now legally a bilingual and multicultural society.

There is no greater tool than the power of broadcasting to influence public opinion on any subject. The new broadcasting bill now before this House is an instrument which my hon. friend should support in our common goal of eradicating intolerance and ignorance. In its declaration of a broadcasting policy for Canada, the bill stipulates under part four of subclause (c) of clause 3:

The Canadian Broadcasting System should, through its programming and the employment opportunities arising out of its operations, serve the needs and interests, and reflect the circumstances and aspirations of Canadian men, women and children, including equal rights, the linguistic duality and multicultural nature of Canadian society and the special place of aboriginal peoples within that society.

There are other parts of this declaration which are particularly relevant to our debate today. They include comments on the publicly-funded Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and its new mandate. I would like to cite some notable exhortations: The programming provided by the Corporation should:

Reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions;

Contribute to shared national consciousness and identity;

Reflect the multicultural nature of Canada.

The broadcasting system is told it must provide programming that reflects the aboriginal cultures of Canada, as resources become available for this purpose.

Distribution undertakings are instructed among several subsections dealing with them, that they should:

Provide access for underserved linguistic and cultural minority communities.

In summation, this land which already is strong will be reinforced yet further by our maintenance and improvement of those vehicles already at our disposal to educate the general public.