

*Government Orders*

Normally it is for us on this side of the House to say a few things positive about the bill, particularly at third reading stage. However, when the Tories refused to rise in their places and say anything about this bill, apart from a few exceptions, it made it even more difficult for us to come out and say something good about the bill.

• (1940)

There are some good things about the bill. It has been already stated that women, children, cultural minorities, aboriginal peoples, and the disabled have all been cited in this legislation. That is good. That is positive. I hope something very good comes of it.

My esteemed colleague for Mount Royal in Montreal has examined this bill in minute detail. She has done an outstanding job. She has absolutely no peer. There is no one who knows this bill like the member for Mount Royal.

I do not want to cover much of the ground that she has covered. However, I do want to spend some time on this matter of national unity as it relates to broadcasting in general and to this bill in particular. I want to do so because broadcasting is and can be a very powerful force for national unity. I really feel that this government does not understand that. It just does not understand the kind of instrument for national unity broadcasting can be.

If the government really understood about broadcasting and national unity, would it take away the national unity mandate from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation? I think not. If the government had understood the linkage between broadcasting and national unity, would the government have gone ahead and divided the CBC board of directors into two standing committees: one for English and one for French? I think not. If the government really understood the kind of force broadcasting can be for national unity, would the government in this legislation, in this bill, attempt to balkanize and regionalize the CRTC? I think not.

I want to talk about broadcasting in general and television in particular, especially the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, because it really forms the very foundation and the fulcrum of broadcasting in this country.

The power of television goes well beyond providing information. I am talking about the kind of information

that we pick up on newscasts. Television does a very good job of imparting information. I am a great fan, for example, of *The National* on the CBC.

However, television goes well beyond that. It does a very good job, if it is given the opportunity, of really getting inside the psyche of this country, the psyche of Canadians and of reaching into what I would call the deepest recesses of our emotions, thoughts and imaginations. Television is good at reflecting Canadian culture in all its forms, in all its multiculturalism. It is very good at reflecting our values. It does a super job of showing our sorrows and joys, our loves and hates, our strengths and weaknesses, our disputes and agreements, our divisions and ties. I could go on. Television really does a good job of telling the story of the Canadian family, and I am talking about a family of over 26 million people.

If given the opportunity and the proper supports of government, television can do a much better job. What happens if we support television, especially the CBC, and we go out of our way, in particular, to support Canadian productions, drama, music, dance programs, and the like? I think if we do that it naturally follows that national unity will be strengthened. We are going through another what one might call constitutional spasm, a constitutional trauma, which we seem to go through about every 10 or 15 years in this country. I think it is partly because we do not know enough of each other and this is where broadcasting and, television in particular can help.

Let me raise some questions: Do we really know what eats away at those people in the province of Quebec who embrace what we call nationalism, who some would call separatists? Do we really know the aches and pains of prairie farmers, particularly the current aches and pains? Do we know what goes on in the minds and the hearts of fishermen on the east coast or the west coast? What do we know about miners in Alberta and British Columbia, woodworkers in Northern Ontario, single mothers in Toronto? I could go on and on.

Television should be given the opportunity, particularly television drama because I recognize there are severe limitations to information programming. I think government support is paramount in this area. If television is given the opportunity, we will get those inside glimpses of the Canadian family.