

Government Orders

which our history has contradicted on a number of occasions. That is unacceptable.

I suggest that the government is making a serious mistake by weakening an institution such as the CBC, which is the cornerstone of our broadcasting system. As far as the government is concerned, the CBC should be relieved of its responsibility for national unity at the time when the government should be using everything at its disposal to ensure that the people of Canada are well informed and share a common vision of the future, while appreciating our regional and linguistic differences.

I believe that building national unity in Canada requires developing its character, building its identity and its national consciousness. We need strong institutions like the CBC to ensure that all regions and all social partners weave together the fabric of national unity.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this is not the way this bill is designed. What this government is doing is building a form of sovereignty association into our national broadcasting system, the CBC, instead of building bridges of communication and common links across this land. Cultural survival is one of the critical issues today.

• (1530)

I have before me an interesting piece of legislation which is presently being looked at by the European council. They have set up an important fund called the Euromidges support fund. It was set up at the end of 1988 to develop the European cinematographic and audiovisual industry. Its main aim is of a cultural nature. It said in its report that the importance of audiovisual works in transmitting European culture in all its forms is obvious. The European cultural values in particular to younger generations must be communicated.

Cultural survival is a critical issue today. Broadcasting is a central vehicle through which Canadians can communicate, a major instrument for Canadian expression in the arts and entertainment, an essential means for providing a Canadian perspective in news information and programming. CBC reaches almost every household, so it is in a unique position to enable this cultural appreciation and growth as identification for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren. This is what will

help form Canada and inform Canada. It becomes a very distinctive culture on the global map.

I find this whole approach totally disturbing. On the television sets in our living-rooms is this little remote control that my grandson calls "the little clicker". We hold the key to the future of the cultural identity of Canada. If you look at this bill and if you look at the way the government has put a sense of sovereignty association into this bill, it is totally disturbing. It has taken the CBC and divided it into English and French. It has taken the national unity mandate away from it. It has taken the CRTC and balkanized it by putting in a "he who hears decides" on a regional level. It has put in the potential for a challenge of its federal jurisdiction through its definition of programming.

This bill is totally unacceptable and the national unity clause is the greatest farce of them all when you see what the government has done in removing that. It has also removed all the other things that make this a distinctive Canadian unity from coast to coast and have allowed us to take a sovereignty association vehicle, instead of being the central nervous system of this country, the transportation unit of the intellect. We have managed to destroy a wonderful concept that needs to be reinstated into this country.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Since the House is dealing with Bill C-40, Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my views on the two amendments moved by my hon. colleagues of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party and aimed at using the CBC in part as a propaganda agency.

I know that the Hon. Member for Mount Royal would simply love to see the CBC become an exponent of her own political convictions, that her leader would love to appear more often on the CBC and feels that the CBC should act as an agent of his party. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that if we respect the freedom of the press, the creative ability and the record of an institution which has adequately served its listening and viewing public, I do not think that we should allow the CBC to become a propaganda agency.

The NDP member has emphasized that the CBC should—

Mr. Waddell: Weaken Canada!