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LB 78

Marie Sandoz entitled The Music Box. It's about her father, Jules Sandoz, and, as you may recall, Marie and her father live up around the Gordon, Nebraska area around Senator Lamb's area, and this was about 1915, 1920, and as Christmas approaches her father comes back from town with this large crate and he unpacks the crate and the crate contains a phonograph plus some cylinder records, and he puts it on, and to Marie Sandoz's amazement the phonograph pours out operatic arias, famous symphonies and other kinds of classical civilized music. And to Marie this is an extremely important point about her father. Though her father was carving a new life for himself and his family in the Sandhills of Nebraska, at the same time he had not abandoned the thousands of years of culture that marks civilized human beings. Now when we talk about public radio, we talk about civilization. We frankly are talking about the kind of things that distinguish we humans in society from other primates in their own kinds of society. We are talking about culture. We are talking about music and ballet and drama, and the arts. And in my opinion, that is what public radio symbolizes. It brings to us over our air waves, over our air waves those values and those traditions that are the mark of our society and the mark of we humans in our joint endeavor to make a new world. Now when Senator Hefner spoke out against public radio, he liked to refer to public radio as government radio. I guess government radio is a pejorative whereas public radio is not. Well, it made me stop and think about the other government functions that we have. A hundred years ago if we wanted to read, we had to go to private rental libraries to get books to read. It was Andrew Carnegie that started the great movement in our country to make libraries available to us all, and what he did is he took thousands of dollars and gave those thousands of dollars to small towns to encourage them to build libraries and then support those libraries year in and year out with public tax dollars. Now you and I don't think of those libraries as government libraries, do we? They are public libraries, and they are the places where you and I can go and our children can go and get books of all stripes, all colors, all fantasies and all imaginations; get phonograph records, get periodicals and get information in our libraries as we control those libraries. Well public radio is the same because public radio essentially represents public ownership of a means of communication that will be bringing us the kinds of things that do distinguish us from the apes. You know, England has had public radio for many years. That's what the British broadcasting system is. It is publicly owned radio and television. It is