

Broadcasting

There are many indications of a growing disquietude among the Canadian people with regard to this aspect of the C.B.C.'s operations. In the little time I have to watch and listen to the programs put out by the C.B.C., I have seen and heard enough personally to be able to give positive evidence to the committee in support of the statements I have just made. Letters which I receive, together with personal contacts, convince me that an ever widening circle of thoughtful people share my concern about the way the Canadian public is being brainwashed without realizing it.

This resolution gives the committee power to send for people and papers. In the past it has been the practice to send mainly for officials of the C.B.C. and representatives of the private broadcasting organizations. I think it is important that the committee should hear not only the views of the producers but also of the consumers of these programs. I suggest that the committee should provide an opportunity for representatives of organizations, such as the Canadian Legion, parent-teacher associations, religious bodies, and others to present their views. Representatives of the various ethnic groups and organizations representing our new Canadians might be asked to appear. All could make valuable suggestions and I hope, therefore, that the committee will make a special effort to provide these various groups with an opportunity to put forward their points of view.

Mr. McGrath: Would the hon. member permit a question? Would the hon. member identify the document from which he was reading?

Mr. Carter: Yes. It was *Routine Proceedings and Orders of the Day*.

Mr. Arthur Smith (Calgary South): I want to say a few words at this point. Having listened to some of the previous speakers give their views of the various problems which they suggest could be examined in the special committee on broadcasting it has occurred to me that we should perhaps first decide in our minds what exactly our responsibility is as parliamentarians to broadcasting, not just to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation but to the independent broadcasters and, of course, to the board of broadcast governors.

I say this in all seriousness because it seems to me that the line of demarcation between the direction or the persuasion that we might give is, indeed, very thin, but I think it is very important that we should have this line, thin though it be, very clearly defined. Each of us has the right to express his own views and I intend, before going

into the area of examination, to give my interpretation of that responsibility. This does not apply only to the committee on broadcasting. It applies to many of the committees which this house sets up from time to time. I suggest, though, that broadcasting does have some very special significance because those who are engaged in public communication of this type have for the most part a very exclusive licence, one which is largely created because, there are only so many available channels and consequently so many available licences.

Obviously, then, those who hold the licences, whether for television or radio broadcasting, have a responsibility to parliament which, in the final analysis, decides through its agencies who should receive permission to carry out their functions.

I suggest our responsibility is just this: that as a committee we are expected to give the most searching analysis to every facet of broadcasting, whether it be the Broadcasting Act, whether it be the public corporation, the private broadcasters or the board of broadcast governors. We would then proceed, as we have done in the past to prepare a report for submission to parliament. Such a report is not necessarily binding, either on the corporation or on the private broadcasters. If it were binding we should have to ask ourselves why we had set up the board of broadcast governors and why the corporation had a board of directors to govern its affairs. Indeed, we should have to ask ourselves why we had given regulatory officials responsibility to carry out the duties which they have.

That does not mean parliament has not still a very important responsibility. If at any time we are unhappy about the principle of the regulations which are being provided, or the way in which these regulations are being carried out, we have, of course, every authority and responsibility as a parliament to change the rules or the principles governing these particular agencies, or the officials concerned. But I think it is important before we go into committee to remind ourselves that we have only the right and the authority to produce a report and make recommendations and not at this stage to direct or legislate. We are not dictating to any of these boards or telling them how to carry out their responsibilities. I fall back on the argument that if this were the case there would be no purpose in setting up these responsible bodies.

I have suggested that the corporation should come back before the committee. Having made an examination some two years