

*Broadcasting Act*

available to us in our relative affluence, and to let us know about the new products which the ingenuity of our system is constantly bringing forward. I none the less think it is a good thing that we should all be asking ourselves, consumers, manufacturers, retailers and advertisers alike, whether we have not gone overboard in this direction, whether we are not engaging in what someone described as advertising overkill and have pushed the amount of advertising to the point where it starts to become self-defeating. Some people have started to "turn off" on advertising in general because of their dislike of the quantity of it or the poor quality or poor taste of some of it.

In these circumstances, I find it a very encouraging sign, if I read the indications correctly, that some of the more thoughtful members of the advertising profession itself are now asking themselves the same questions and are re-examining in their minds the basic principles which should govern the use of advertising in our society. Both speakers who preceded me referred to the amount of cynicism generated in respect of advertising and the great dangers of the kind of cynicism which is inculcated in young minds. I think there should be a great deal more study in depth in respect of this question. If all of us should be examining our consciences as to how we think advertising fits into the kind of society which we want to have, we should be doing so even more with respect to advertising directed at children—for here we are dealing with less discriminating, more impressionable minds, the minds of those who are less able, perhaps, to distinguish between fact and fancy; less able to distinguish between reality and puffery.

I do not think I would go along with the proposition, however, that we ban all advertising directed at children. Advertising is a fact of contemporary society and it seems to me that it is unwise to attempt to insulate the child completely from such a fact. He will have to come to grips with it some day and it is well that he should start to come to grips with it, within the limits of his capacity, at a comparatively early age.

For that matter, neither the bill itself nor the hon. member who proposed it dealt with the question of who is a child and at what age a person ceases to be a child. Neither are the guiding principles to be incorporated in the legislation set out. Someone else would have to work out these. Someone will have to come to grips with the problem of what is a children's program. Some advertisements in respect of cereals have a plausible direction toward an adult audience. There would have to be an administrative decision concerning what age group a program is aimed at and what age group should or should not be exposed to certain advertising. There is a great deal which has not been brought out so far in this debate.

Because of the limited powers of discrimination which a young child has, far greater care must be taken with respect to advertising directed at children than is necessarily applicable to advertising directed at adults, lest the child acquire a totally distorted view as to what is reality. I think it is wrong, for instance, in any advertising directed at children that the impression should be given that a toy is much larger or faster than it actually is, that it will perform certain functions which in fact it will not perform, and that in normal purchase it comes complete with

[Mr. Francis.]

all sorts of additional parts which in fact must be bought separately. I also find particularly objectionable the so-called hard sell when directed at children.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will excuse this philosophizing but I feel it is necessary for us to look at some of the fundamentals in order to come to the best understanding of this bill. I think the purpose of private members' hour is very well served by the introduction of bills of this nature in order to explore an area in which regulatory difficulties may be involved. We must ask ourselves what we are trying to do, what is our aim.

To revert to the discussion which took place in a committee of this House, I understand that there were further meetings between the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, and as a result of what took place voluntary codes emerged and discussions resulted between the department, the producers involved and the regulatory agencies.

Mr. Speaker, time does not permit me to develop some of the other themes I had hoped to develop. In deference to other hon. members who are anxious to speak in this debate, I shall conclude by saying I agree with the purpose of the bill and the views of the two previous speakers. However, I believe it would be wise and proper to have a full and complete debate, which I hope will take place in this House and in the other place. I look forward to the development of appropriate measures by the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs as well as the other regulatory agencies involved.

**Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** Mr. Speaker, I shall take only a few minutes to discuss one aspect of advertising and the type of product sold to households and young people. I am referring particularly to popular breakfast cereals. A survey has been made in connection with breakfast cereals served to young people in the standard, well known boxes. The result of the survey is shocking, to say the least. It indicates that many of the breakfast cereals that are well known through television and newspaper advertising—particularly television advertising—are almost completely lacking in nutritional value.

There has been a good deal of comment on this. One of the comments referred to a notice on a cereal box. I do not have the exact wording but it said something to the effect that with milk and sugar "this cereal provides a balanced nutritional snack." When it was analysed it was found that the only value in the cereal bowl was the milk and sugar, and that the cereal itself contained no nutritional value.

What bothers me so much about this problem is that here we are in a land of plenty where we have goods on the shelves which housewives can buy in quantity, with great boxes apparently bursting with foods which provide energy, and yet we find that many of our children suffer from malnutrition. Experiments have been conducted in connection with some of these cereals. I do not want to single out any of them because the results were published long ago, just as the results of cigarette testing were published. However, it was shown that even the well-known breakfast cereals are almost completely lacking in nutritional value. Most of the best substances have been taken out of them. In fact, I understand that most breakfast cereals are now reconstituted. They appear to be in