

Hon. Allister Grosart: Honourable senators, I wish to refer for a moment to Vote 1, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, on page 5.

I apologize for reverting to the subject on which I made a few remarks last evening. The reason I return to it is that I have had a number of telephone calls today, and a number of people have stopped me in the corridors, all asking, "What are you going to do about it?"

The second question they ask is, "Who is responsible?" The wording of the vote which we are asked to approve in the amount of \$110 million is "a grant in respect of the net operating amount required to discharge the responsibilities of the national broadcasting service." That is the item under which we are discussing this. I think it is interesting that the word we have here is "responsibilities", since the question which is agitating many Canadian minds today is the irresponsibility of the national broadcasting system.

This is the first time in my life that I have publicly criticized the C.B.C. On the contrary, there are many occasions when I have defended the C.B.C. Today I am in the position of many Canadians who are saying, our patience has run out. Patience with whom? With whoever is responsible.

I spent some time today trying to find out who is responsible for deciding what may or may not be said or shown on the publicly-owned national broadcasting service. The only answer that I can get is that Parliament is responsible.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): That is right.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: This is not a case where an emanation of the Government of Canada is under the direct responsibility of the minister or of the department nor, according to the information I have obtained, is it a matter which can be said to be the responsibility of the Cabinet. The C.B.C. merely reports to Parliament through a minister. I do not know whose concept that was. I know it was developed many years ago, but I suggest today that it is time Parliament revised that archaic, impracticable and unworkable method of controlling the use to which funds voted by Parliament are put.

Honourable senators, this chamber is part of Parliament, and we like to think that we are an important part of Parliament. I ask, are we going to vote \$110 million, saying to ourselves that we do so knowing that we have

no control whatsoever under the system that we have set up as to how that money is used?

Under the present system, we have a responsibility and I suggest that we are not discharging it. Apparently the attitude being taken by Parliament is that it matters not whether this money is spent in the public interest or not; it matters not whether it is spent in accordance with the public will.

What can we do about it? I am not an expert in such matters. An adequate answer would have to come from somebody who knows much more about how this matter can be handled. I presume that the question could be referred to a committee of the Senate. There would be some value in such a committee, to which we could call some of those people and ask them: Why do you do this? Is it just to get ratings? Is it your view that it is your main responsibility to get the largest audience possible, regardless of whom you offend?

I know enough about the broadcasting business to know that it is easy to get a very large audience. All you have to do is to think of ways in which to incense people, ways in which to laugh at the standards set by parents who have tried to inculcate them into their children. As long as you laugh at and ridicule such standards, you will get an audience. Does that justify the ridicule? Honourable senators, I think not.

I suggest to the honourable Leader of the Government that he consider carefully taking appropriate and effective steps for the more adequate discharge of the responsibility of Parliament, and particularly of this part of Parliament, in respect to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Hon. W. M. Benidickson: Honourable senators, I appreciated the final remarks by Senator Grosart. A committee of the Senate could do very well in looking at the programs, policies and future programs of the C.B.C. However, I rise only on the bill we have before us, which is for supply, for the main Estimates.

I understand that in the other place they have been confined to 30 days of debate. I hope this bill may be referred to a committee here, but I would like the honourable leader to say whether the time will be unlimited in this place. Do these appropriations go to the Finance Committee, which is under a capable chairman?