

[Translation]

Mr. Audet: Mr. Fortier asked me, during the intermission, to try not to read our brief, and I understand that it is perhaps a bit long to read even if the brief is relatively short. But I shall try to summarize it, if you wish, and I would request your indulgence since, unfortunately I am not a member of the legal profession, I do not have the ability of these professional persons to summarize a situation in a few words.

Mr. Fortier: Radio and television broadcasters are not as bad as that.

Mr. Audet: Then, I can tell you that CKTM-TV was founded by me. I left the CBC after 13 years in somewhat responsible positions, in order to establish my own company and set up station CKTM-TV in Trois-Rivières.

As you know, station CKTM-TV is located midway between Montreal, Quebec City and Sherbrooke which already was a region very open to all the influences of the surrounding cities. We answered the call of the Canadian government which, at that time, requested private stations to take responsibility for broadcasting in all the cities except the six principal ones of Canada. And so, we felt that the Canadian government through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was inviting us to accept a challenge which was very interesting. We faced it with pleasure and we took on certain obligations to the Canadian people who entrusted us with an important mission, and we also understood that at that time the Canadian government was towards us.

In our brief, as you have read, we thought we would give a short history in order to place the matter which we are discussing into details of this history, except to say that there is no doubt that broadcasting, from the beginning, has taken on special importance in Canada, and that the Canadian people and their government have very rapidly become aware of the importance which television and radio would eventually assume. Initially, only radio was talked about and this is surely what explains the number of Commissions which have studied the problems of broadcasting in Canada.

I would perhaps like to note briefly that the scale, in terms of either the range of operations, or the necessary capital for these operations, is exactly what was foreseen 18 years ago.

Undoubtedly you will recall that 18 years ago when I was associated with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation—and I was one of those who was open to much criticism then—and it had only \$4,500,000 to establish two stations in Toronto and in Montreal, and it seemed to be an enormous amount at that time. It was already asked some years later how—and I was also a member of that committee—it would be possible to establish a microwave network to link up all parts of Canada.

It is, therefore, remarkable, isn't it, that within a period of a few years, Canadians have succeeded in setting up such a strong system, and which, I believe—this can be said among ourselves—has been a source of pride for Canada in all the other countries. I had occasion to visit other broadcasting organizations a few times in other parts of the world, and that is the comment that was made to me personally, that several countries much stronger than ours would like to have a broadcasting system similar to Canada's.

We have perhaps reached a period when we are trying to see what we have done previously and what we shall do, where we have arrived, and what we shall do in the years to come. And I believe that this is what is important, to see the future, and I have noted from this morning's questions, that this is what interests you.

In the last few months, let us say, the last few years, we have asked ourselves: if broadcasting has been so important among Canadians, would it not be normal to assume that in exercising a certain influence on broadcasting, one could hope to acquire much more quickly, or much more efficiently perhaps, Canadian objectives such as, the promotion of Canadian identity, of Canadian culture. And the broadcasters have been the first, and with much enthusiasm, to face this new challenge. We are happy that so much trust is accorded us. On the other hand, for those of us who assisted in the development of the whole system and for those who are called upon to make it work, there is one point which troubles us, and this is the lack of proportion which exists, Mr. Chairman, between the collective means which the strength of the stations can dispose of, and the range of operations to undertake.

Since we are re-evaluating the situation, it seems to me here that perhaps if we are sincere Canadians, and we must assume that we all are, we wish Canada to be a great country, having its own strong culture, and