

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 1, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

PROGRAM "SUNDAY"—USE OF CRIMINAL CODE TO ENSURE SUITABLE MATERIAL

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I ask whether any assurance has been received from the C.B.C. that the lewd and pornographic program called "Sunday" will not be repeated? What is the attitude of the C.B.C. in this regard? If there is not to be any action by the C.B.C. to protect young people from this type of program, will the minister give consideration to investigating whether the Criminal Code contains regulations which might be effective against those who apparently will defy the law?

Hon. Judy V. LaMarsh (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I did not hear the whole of the right hon. gentleman's question. This morning there was a meeting of the broadcasting committee at which officials of the C.B.C. were heard.

Several members of the house who are not members of the committee attended this meeting, and although I have received only a very sketchy report of it, I am afraid not all the members who attended that meeting were able to ask the questions they had planned. I have not had the opportunity to discuss this personally with the president of the C.B.C. but I shall be glad to do so either today or tomorrow.

With respect to the Criminal Code, it is my understanding that matters involving breach of the criminal law are the responsibility of the provinces and of attorneys general. I would be glad to discuss the matter with my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin), but while I have not looked into it in particular, that seems to be one of the generally

accepted rules. I think that if there were a self-evident breach of the criminal law, any interested individual might himself lay an information in the normal way and cause a prosecution to be launched. However, in the very slender job which parliament has given me to do with respect to the C.B.C. I would hate to have to add to that burden the responsibility of having to police the corporation.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I would never want a finer policewoman than the hon. lady. I am sure if she were in that position we would all be protected against grave injustice. However, I suggest the matter be looked into because Canadians have a right to a greater assurance than that given today by the president of the C.B.C. that this production was a mistake. There are too many such mistakes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. R.-E. Régimbal (Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question. In view of the fact that the manager of CKMI-TV in Quebec city has taken the commendable initiative of henceforth checking personally the contents of the program "Sunday" before its presentation to the public, could the hon. Secretary of State inform the house if, to her knowledge, managers of other stations have indicated that they intend to exercise similar control?

[*English*]

Miss LaMarsh: No, I have not heard of this being done, and while I have never seen an agreement between a C.B.C. affiliated station and the C.B.C. I would think they might be in breach of it if they did so.

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): On a further supplementary, Mr. Speaker—and I ask this question not too facetiously. I wonder whether the minister would consider taking into consideration the possibility of appointing the hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan) to the position of director of programming in the C.B.C.?

Miss LaMarsh: Already this has occurred to two of you.