

*Canadian Broadcasting Policy*

because I hope that the document we will see unveiled at the end of the debate on the resolution will be a comprehensive effort to prevent the kind of merry-go-round in which we have been involved for so long.

This afternoon we have heard references by the minister and others to the fact that this legislation has been two years in planning. Actually it goes back even farther than that, certainly to 1963, and from that time to this day there has been an almost continuous dialogue on how we should try to solve some of these problems.

I confess, without having seen the legislation, that I am not wildly enthusiastic about its potentialities to solve the problems of this complex medium. As I have said on previous occasions, and it is appropriate again today, you cannot legislate good broadcasting. In fact I think that the most that legislation can do in the broadcasting field is to prevent the worst from happening. I have seen no evidence over the years that legislation can bring out the best. So while I recognize the necessity for legislation and while I express the hope that it will be comprehensive, I do not think any of us in this chamber or in the country should be in any way, shape or form, enthusiastic about it and assume that once it is passed all of the problems will go away, because that is simply not going to be the case.

One of the reasons for this had its beginnings as far back as 1957, almost ten years ago to the day, when at Mount Allison University I met the then minister of national revenue, a gentleman for whom I as well as many others in this chamber had great respect, the late hon. Mr. Nowlan. He was then planning the legislation under which we are now operating. We spent a great deal of time during that meeting trying to cope with many of the matters which I have heard brought up again this afternoon. Indeed, there is a striking similarity between the references that have been made here and the generally conscientious efforts that were being made ten years ago to solve the same kind of problems.

The criticisms that have developed over the past ten years, the controversies and the difficulties that have surrounded every phase of broadcasting, really cannot be laid at the door of the legislation which was brought in in 1957 or 1958; I do not recall exactly when it was promulgated. There were inadequacies in that act, as I am sure there will be in this one. But the real culprit, if that is what one can call it, has been the fantastic growth in broadcasting over the past decade and also an

incredible and remarkable change in public attitudes. I think that both of these factors have to be considered together if we are to have any kind of proper perspective toward the task we are now undertaking.

Even the most expert person of ten years ago could not possibly have forecast what has since developed in television from a purely technical point of view. For example, I recall many a seminar in those days at which those farsighted people who forecast satellite transmission and coast to coast microwave networks, two of which we have today, were laughed at. The very concept and the very idea, putting aside for the moment political or philosophical considerations, of two networks, one public and one private, spanning this country was at that time and for many years after 1957 declared to be an absolutely unreal conception. We can see how fast things have gone ahead in that decade. This in itself has helped to pace the legislation.

The other thing that has happened is the involvement of tremendous change in social and public attitudes. As a broadcaster I can recall the time when less than ten years ago I had a most serious discussion with the Board of Broadcast Governors on the whole question of obscenity and the propriety of certain types of language on television. I recall that we had to deliberately "beep out", to use an expression familiar in the trade, a word which I am not sure is parliamentary even to this day, a simple "damn" which was used in a statement made by someone in a film. A few weeks ago I witnessed on a private station, so this is not a criticism of the C.B.C. and indeed I am not sure if it is a criticism at all, a news report which many hon. members perhaps saw. It had to do with a most unfortunate incident involving the adoption of children. In the scene which was shown in this new *cinéma vérité* technique for the coverage of an event the most remarkable obscenities were used by all concerned and particularly by some of the principals to this action. While, as I say, I am not at the moment commenting on the propriety or otherwise, I am pointing out the vast changes that have taken place. I am told there were criticisms but that by and large the audience took it in its stride.

I have spoken of this incident because today I do not propose, and indeed I am not in a position to because I have not seen the legislation, to deal with the specifics of broadcasting problems, but I do want to say something which some hon. members will know I have said on many previous occasions. The

[Mr. Jamieson.]