

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

Then on page 3747 the Secretary of State says:

—we have tried in this bill to carry each of them through—

Further on she says “we reached”, and “we believe”, and that this “we believe” will permit implementation of the standing committee’s wishes in this regard. Then on page 3752 we read:

—Mr. Speaker, we searched for a name which would best represent—

Again on page 3752 we have another reference to we. The Secretary of State said:

Although the white paper proposed that there should be seven part time members and the standing committee recommended six, we have now on more mature consideration—

Apparently that is a back-handed compliment to the standing committee because she says:

—we have now on more mature consideration come to the conclusion that so small a number of part time members would not be sufficient to provide proper representation of public interests. It is therefore proposed in this bill that there should be ten part time members of the commission—

If we carry on reading we find at page 3756 the word “we” referred to several times. The minister says “we” have arrived at a consensus, and “we” hope the bill will be endorsed. Why cannot these people say who “we” are, instead of creating the impression that the Liberal caucus has agreed upon this or the Liberal party has agreed upon that, and let it be known that it is the cabinet that has agreed upon it.

At the very end of the Secretary of State’s remarks in the very last paragraph she says that having all these things in mind she recommends this legislation to the favourable consideration of hon. members. I wonder why she asks us for favourable consideration. She has told us what “we” are going to do, what “we” have done and what “we” want. She has told us what “we” think is in the interests of the nation. I suggest to you that there was no need to ask for favourable consideration of hon. members.

I have picked out some of the “we’s” to show you who is formulating the policy that we are asked to endorse. I have picked out references to what “we” are going to do. For instance, at page 3748 there is no suggestion that the cabinet is asking parliament to endorse this, or the cabinet is asking parliament to vote on the question.

[Mr. Cowan.]

We have a reference at page 3748 as follows:

The prohibition of political broadcasts immediately before elections is to be continued, with some modifications, and the commission will be empowered—

This is stated before the bill is voted upon. Surely the cabinet could ask us to empower the commission to do this. But, no, we are told it is going to be empowered. Again at page 3748 it is stated:

—the commission will have to take fully into account—

We are being told in advance what is to be, and we are told in advance what is going to be done; and we are given to understand that if we do not support the cabinet we are likely to have an election.

We then see at page 3748:

The conditions of license will also be used—

It does not say anything about the cabinet believing that the conditions of license should be such and such, expressing the trust and that parliament will endorse this belief. No, we are told to stand and deliver—and one has to stand up to vote in this parliament. Stand and deliver is the only way.

Again at page 3748 we find the statement that “we” will have a great deal more flexibility. They certainly will, if this bill is passed. Again at page 3748 we have reference to the fact that the commission will do this and that, further reference to the fact that the commission “will be required”, “will be granted”, and again “will be required”, and “will be subject to”, and so on and so forth. It suggests that such and such “will also be laid down”, “will have to”, “will be empowered” and “will be governed”.

There is no evidence to show that the cabinet ever thinks of asking the elected representatives of the people to consider their suggestions favourably. Oh, no, they just write the bill and then tell the dumb private members to support it, or they will have to face an election. I believe members of parliament were elected to parliament to express here in Ottawa what their constituents want to see done. They are not sent down here to act like dumb bunnies endorsing the thoughts of a few people who have been called to the cabinet.

● (4:00 p.m.)

I am unable to endorse the principle of this bill. I cannot endorse it when I consider the way these bills are introduced into parliament, without members knowing anything about them. If you look at the debate on the