

We are in Canada, we are not in Cuba. The Prime Minister or someone else said last night on television about separation—I think it was Mr. Bourassa—: While in Europe people are realizing that they must unite and form some kind of federation, here in Quebec we have dummies who would like to throw away everything and start having the same troubles as Europe.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we should not tolerate the broadcasting and communication systems to be used to destroy what we hold dear, what we love, what allows us to be what we are, absolutely free to say what we think, to write what we want.

Therefore, if Bill C-5, with the new commission, aims at achieving better understanding among the people and the provinces, I shall be happy to support a bill which will unite Canadians instead of destroying them as certain people try to do. Let us work for the progress and the development of all Canada which will also enable the provinces to strengthen their position.

[English]

**Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Kootenay):** Mr. Speaker, we have before us Bill C-5. Apparently, its aims are simplicity itself. It seeks to establish the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission. There is a marvellously devious preamble to the bill. It contains the existing letters of the organization and its abbreviation, CRTC, even as it somewhat manages to alter the structure of that organization.

● (1620)

One suspects that the operation, as well as being housekeeping, is also a case of tightening the ship somewhat for the anticipated confrontation between the federal government and the provinces over the issue of broadcasting and broadcast control. That confrontation, at least as it affects my own province of British Columbia, may be a little further away than the minister anticipated when the bill was prepared and as he began to pilot it through.

At one time there was a feeling that the confrontation would develop over educational television. That always seemed the most natural ground on which the confrontation of broadcasting could develop because the provincial jurisdiction in education is absolutely clear and the federal jurisdiction in broadcasting is equally clear. They came together at that particular point and it looked as if the battle could be fought out there, if it was to be fought out anywhere. There has been a lack of development in educational television in recent years. It has not proved to be the effective way of transmitting knowledge, concepts, ideas, morality or anything else that its proponents held it out to be some years ago.

I have always had the gravest doubt about the efficiency and usefulness of the role of television in education. I subscribe to the theory that the prime use of television is for entertainment. I think that all our government problems with this rather thorny, elusive and ephemeral medium would be simplified a great deal if everyone came around to that way of thinking and realized that the role of television is primarily the distribution of entertainment to those who desire to be entertained. Educationally, it has been and continues to be a disappointment. It, like almost

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all the other aids to education, serves the purpose of placing something between teacher and student. It is one of the reasons why, in North America, people are concerned about a return to savagery. This concern is continentwide. Only human contact can make people humane or fully human.

Attempts in the field of education to place something between teacher and student, be it film, slide or television screen have in many instances served a negative purpose, limiting what has already been greatly limited by changes in programming, namely, the contact between teacher and student. At one time it was felt that educational television would allow a master teacher to teach thousands of students at the same moment. Unfortunately, we tended to lose the concept of the master teacher in the classroom. I contend that the need is greater now than it ever has been to have students meet, confront and be taught directly by master teachers. There has been a loss of excitement over educational television. In my province, the Kamloops school district pioneered a great deal of work. About eight years ago, there was enormous excitement about the development of local television programming that would be educational.

Provincial and other governments have come to realize some of the questions involved. The kind of programming that needs to be developed, and its dissemination, simply could not be handled by a group of teachers knocking around after school. They had to be professionally prepared. The information had to be disseminated, and in many ways this became very expensive. Therefore, the bloom is off; the excitement has died down.

If Friday's edition of the *Ottawa Citizen* is to be believed, we can assume that the takeover of B.C. Telephone by the British Columbia government has been greatly delayed. Hon. members may recall that takeover was promised immediately following the success of the NDP in the last provincial election. There was concern expressed in the province that the culmination of a takeover of B.C. Tel, a move into educational television and the setting up of what would amount to a provincial broadcasting system, would place in the hands of a somewhat doctrinaire political regime an extraordinary power it did not have before. There was a looking to the CRTC and the federal broadcasting control to provide something of a safeguard against what many people found to be a rather frightening possibility.

It seems there will be a delay in the hope of the British Columbia government to take over B.C. Tel. I imagine that will not be a great deal of comfort for people who have just received the news that an application is going forward for a 20 per cent increase in telephone rates in that province.

One thing that bothers me very much about this bill is that the CRTC, along with its other duties, will be spending its time determining the level of rates for telephone subscribers. This has already been alluded to by the previous speaker. The CRTC has been very much preoccupied with cablevision regulation and broadcast regulation in terms of licensing. Determining the channels available and how they are to be distributed for federal television and radio takes an enormous amount of time.