

Broadcasting

when the Canadian need for exports virtually demands aggressive use of every publicity medium available.

Working relationships with broadcasting organizations in NATO partner countries are being eliminated arbitrarily, it seems to me, while jammed broadcasts to only hypothetical audiences behind the iron curtain are being continued. I do not quarrel with that procedure. In spite of our inability to determine exactly the nature of the reception of and the reaction to these broadcasts in iron curtain countries, I think it is important that this service should be maintained. This I have already insisted on.

However, it seems to me that there are two sides to the coin. The Soviet union is encouraging a program of careful broadcasting to the Scandinavian countries. For instance, I am advised that quite recently the Soviet union began a series of broadcasts, very cleverly concealed, to some of these Scandinavian countries, namely Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Holland. While these broadcasts have been going on for years in some form, they have now taken on a new form. They offer well edited propaganda material addressed to the appetite for local news on the part of the people in Scandinavia. This propaganda is aimed particularly at these countries and is addressed to them by giving these people not news of events of an international character but news of local events in Norway and the other Scandinavian countries, and associating with this local news extremely sinister propaganda. This expansion is being carefully followed by the foreign offices, I am sure, of many countries.

It seems to me that a country like Canada, whose international service has been so widely appreciated in Scandinavia as well as in other nations of western Europe, should think carefully before dispensing with its service at a time when the Soviet union has increased and accelerated its broadcasts to the same European area.

My views on these matters may not be based on a full appreciation of all the factors involved. I can only state my point of view as I see it in the light of information that is made available to me. I hope that either the minister will deal with this situation directly or that the matter will be carefully gone into when the committee is established and there will be an opportunity of examining the officials of the corporation. However, as the minister has indicated that the decision is one for the Department of External Affairs itself and not for the corporation, perhaps he would think that the desirable moment to deal with it would be before the house had actually dealt with and passed the motion.

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

Hon. J. M. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few rather brief comments on this question.

First, I should like to say how fully I agree with what was said by the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi as to what we owe to the C.B.C. and as to the importance of this committee dealing carefully and wisely with the subject. I should also like to say that I think the hon. member for Essex East has raised a question which is well worth our most serious consideration.

As to the remainder of my short speech, Mr. Speaker, I am going to take a rather cowardly course; I am going to quote, as far as you will allow me to do so, an extract from the speech made last July by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Nowlan). It is so good that I should like to think I had written it myself; if I work hard enough at it I may be able to persuade myself that I did so.

The minister was talking about the position of the corporation and he has this to say, as reported at page 6193 of *Hansard* of July 13, 1960. He speaks of those who—

—from time to time approach me asking why I permitted this or that to happen, or why I did or did not take action of a particular kind—

He describes the function of the minister as follows:

—the minister is here only to report to parliament for the C.B.C., and that he has no power whatsoever to exercise control over that corporation. That is a matter of law, that is a matter of statute, and that is a matter of public policy.

Then he goes on to refer to the fact that we in this party should be especially interested because it was R. B. Bennett who set up the corporation. May I digress for one moment in order to say that I think up to the moment history has dealt rather shabbily with that great man who founded many things that have been useful, including the C.B.C. and the Bank of Canada. The Minister of National Revenue pointed out that we in this party should be especially interested in the C.B.C. for that reason. I should like to think that we would be interested. Then the minister, speaking on the principle of the independence of the C.B.C., goes on to say this:

That principle has been continued, and that has been the finding of every royal commission since which has made recommendations on the subject, in addition to about every parliamentary committee, and there have been around 20 of them since the corporation was established.

It is embarrassing at times. There are times when I should like to be able to exercise some control and power, but if there is sometimes embarrassment and frustration on the one side there is, on the other side, the obvious danger of having a public service such as the C.B.C. brought under political control.