

*Radio and Television*

corporation. I must say I had a good deal of sympathy with what some of the private broadcasters had to say about employees of the C.B.C. exercising control over them. I think they had a valid point when they said that they did not object so much to being controlled by the board of governors or by people directly responsible to the board as they did to employees lower down the scale exercising control over them. They felt that this created jealousies between the private stations and some of the public stations which may have been unfortunate. I do not claim to possess any personal knowledge but I think an argument could be made and in my opinion the basic solution suggested in the Fowler report that there should be one board to control both but that control should not be exercised by employees actually engaged in the operating agency is a good and sound one.

But what is most important, what I should like to emphasize above all, is that national broadcasting should be as independent of the government as the judiciary. What is important is that we find a formula—whether it has been found by the Fowler commission I am not absolutely sure—which will make it absolutely certain that there is no way in which the government can yield to the temptation, which I suppose is present in all executives, namely to use all legitimate means to further their own ends, to exercise pressure upon the people who have control of this great agency, which we believe must be a national agency and must be supported by the state, in order to favour one political party, one group or one set of ideas rather than another. We do not want to have a totalitarian type of broadcasting system. If we are going to have a national system, we have to have one that is financed by the state to some degree and controlled by an agency of the state.

In that regard it seems to me that the great historic experience of the British peoples in establishing courts that can be completely independent of the executive, and they are independent, is the real model and pattern for us to follow and that in this matter more than in any other field it is of vital importance, not only that there should be no interference by the executive branch of the government but that there should be no colour of interference. If the government brings before us proposals which cover this point completely, which give us real assurance that what has been the case over the past 20 years will continue to be the case, then in my opinion they will have no difficulty with that part of their legislation in getting it through the house.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

As I said at the beginning, and I say it again now in coming to the close of my remarks, if I felt that the Minister of National Revenue was himself going to decide this question I would have great hope and great confidence. But we have had from hon. gentlemen opposite, in their different metamorphoses—and they have been many in the past 25 years—many divergent views about how broadcasting should be carried on in this country. We had Mr. Drew's famous proposal to which the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) referred last night, that all the lucrative broadcasting should be left to private industry and the government should pick up the tab for the outlying parts of the country. In 1952 the hon. member for Laurier demolished that proposition so completely that we never heard it again. Incidentally, he made one of the most magnificent speeches that I ever heard in this house; that was before I was a member.

I do not believe there is much danger of the Tory party reviving that proposition. Then, we had the Prime Minister making a statement at Kenora, with which I am sure the minister is familiar, on March 18, when he said:

I have read and studied the report.

The reference is to the Fowler report.

We intend to bring in legislation for a semi-judicial body similar to the board of transport commissioners so that radio and television will have that justice which is the essence of our system.

The time is long overdue to assure private stations in competition with the publicly-owned national organization, that their cases shall be judged by an independent body instead of as in the past by those in national competition, acting as judge and jury.

I would not have minded so much the first paragraph, but I do not care very much for the second. I imagine that perhaps the Prime Minister was speaking, as he sometimes does, without a text and perhaps without the same amount of reflection that he might have given to his words on a different occasion.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I rarely ask for the indulgence of the house, but I could finish in one minute.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Has the hon. member unanimous consent to proceed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** As I was saying, with the first half of the Prime Minister's statement I find no difficulty, but the second half worries me. It worries me quite a lot. This conception of competition, and this conception