

Canadian Broadcasting Act

compare railroad transportation and broadcasting in this country. The two are entirely different. This government accepts the findings of the royal commission on the control of broadcasting in Canada as sound and sensible, and in the best interests of the Canadian people.

Mr. Drew: May I raise one question which, if the minister does not feel it is proper to answer at this point, he could so indicate. It does seem to me that no distinction has been drawn which would show why the government thinks it is appropriate to control air channels for aircraft, both public and private, and not for radio. Has the government considered that point?

Mr. McCann: For aircraft?

Mr. Drew: Yes. A great deal of the argument has been based on the theory that an allocation of air channels would be involved in connection with radio, which in some ways suggests reasons why there could not be an independent board. I would point out that an independent board has been set up to control air travel in this country, allocating air channels without suggesting there is any vested interest in those air channels.

Mr. McCann: The difference is that air channels for broadcasting are allocated on an international basis by agreement between the several countries of this western hemisphere.

Mr. Drew: So are the air routes, where they are international.

Mr. McCann: Most of the air routes to which the hon. member has been referring are our own air routes.

Mr. Knowles: It is 6.15.

Mr. McCann: I shall only be a moment in putting the rest of this on the record.

There have also been some suggestions from the other side of the house about allowing private stations to form and join networks. This, of course, is tied in with the idea of a separate regulatory body. Once again I should like to quote from the commission report. On page 288, it says:

There are, however, two other important factors to be considered. One is that the formation of networks would involve the withdrawal of local stations as outlets for national programs and would therefore (as we have just stated in another connection) disrupt the present system of national coverage. The second is that the formation of private-station networks would bring them into commercial competition with the C.B.C. in the national field with the same consequences as private broadcasters have found so objectionable in the local field.

The general effect of private network broadcasting would, we believe, be the same as that of a separate regulatory body. It would destroy the national system.

[Mr. McCann.]

Some of the hon. members opposite appear to be in a great hurry to see some private operators get television broadcasting licences. It seems to me there are things that are much more important than the establishment of monopoly positions on television channels by private interests, from which they might hope to make a good deal of money in the future. Far more important to this country is the building up of a television broadcasting system which will help to link the country together in a new way; which will use a large amount of Canadian talent; and which, while bringing in some material from outside the country, will be essentially a Canadian operation carried on in the national interests. Into this system I expect later it will be possible to fit private operations co-ordinated under the over-all system serving community interests, and also acting as outlets for national program service. This is the recommendation of the royal commission, and this seems to me the sensible way in which television should develop in Canada in the general public interest.

We are proposing that this bill be referred to the special committee on broadcasting. The committee will be able to study in detail the main provisions of the bill, and also the minor amendments to the Canadian Broadcasting Act which are proposed for purposes of clarification and to meet changed conditions.

At 6.15 p.m. the house took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. Alistair Stewart (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, when the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Drew) adjourned the debate at 6.15, I had hoped that he would enlarge somewhat on the remarks he made at a previous stage.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I did not understand that the leader of the official opposition adjourned the debate. As he stood, I called it 6.15. There was no adjournment of the debate at 6.15.

Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North): Then I am under a misapprehension, Mr. Speaker, because I thought the leader of the opposition had the floor and was going to claim it when the house resumed. That is neither here nor there, however, for I intend now to discuss Bill No. 17 and certain matters which have arisen in the course of the debate.

Let me say right away that we in this group are in favour of the bill and that we of