

• (11:00 a.m.)

The Chairman: Gentlemen, it is now 11 o'clock. May I, before adjournment, ask if you would consent to having the correspondence which has been distributed at the Minister's request and referred to printed as an appendix to today's proceedings. Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chairman: The Committee will meet again at 3.30 o'clock this afternoon.

AFTERNOON SITTING

• (3:53 p.m.)

The Chairman: Gentlemen, when we adjourned at 11 o'clock a number of members still wanted to question the Minister on her opening statement. The next name on my list is Mr. McCleave.

Mr. McCleave: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a somewhat long preamble but only a few questions to direct to the Secretary of State. We have had reports from the Glassco Commission, The Fowler Commission, the President's study group, the Auditor General, and recommendations by parliamentary committees; yet it seems to be the general consensus that there is defiance of such recommendations both at the management level—presumably below the top level, and at the programming level.

Then we come to the exchange that was presented to us by the Secretary this morning between Mr. Sylvestre and the Minister. Mr. Sylvestre's position seems to be that even if Parliament enacts in clause 2 of this preamble that national unity is the aim for which we spend public moneys on the CBC, the Sylvestre crowd wants to be free to use public moneys to promote its own beliefs—and I presume those are separatists beliefs—not just reporting them, sir, but vigorously advancing that point of view to distort the feelings of the majority of Quebec people. Now why not let people of that ilk know that they should either follow the law that we intend to enact—this is the question I put to the Minister because I want to find out how it can be done—or have the decency to resign and take to soap boxes since no other self-respecting employer in Quebec would want

to hire people who are irresponsible or law breaking.

Perhaps I have stated it as tersely as I could but this seemed to be Sylvestre's opinion. He deliberately took what was national policy and tried to make that a particular political issue, whereas we, as a reasonably non-partisan Committee, are trying to come up with a totally non-partisan approach on what the objectives should be of the moneys spent on broadcasting.

My question to the Minister is this. Does the proposed Act do any more than we ever had before to ensure that defiance at junior levels in state broadcasting is corrected or are we simply hoping that Dr. Davidson and Mr. Picard, or whoever will be shortly anointed with these positions, will be able to tackle it on a personal basis? Have we enough teeth in this law, Madam Minister?

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, may I say, first, that nothing disturbed me more in the circumstances surrounding the debate than this telegram, and I answered it extensively because I felt that it was a very important issue. It is possible that there was a misunderstanding, somewhat in the nature of Mr. Prittie's query in the House, and perhaps it had to do with one of these common Canadian difficulties in which there is disagreement of terms used. I think the hon. member will remember a recent occasion when that happened with people of his own party. So I wanted to make it crystal clear what the government had in mind in drawing the legislation. Now it crossed my mind with some force that members of the government or I, myself, might be labouring under a delusion that this was the consensus, that this was what Parliament wanted. I was firmly of the opinion that this institution was intended, as are all institutions that we develop in this unique country, to meld us together and, yet, having received this telegram I question whether I had drawn an assumption that was not there. I would hope that the Committee would make it clear, since it represents Parliament, that this is what the institution is for and that there is not any question of it. If that is not the view of the Committee then I hope that they make that clear because it is obvious, if that is not the view of the Committee, that I have misrepresented the situation in the letter which I have written to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters.