

The minister pointed out that, as a by-product of this domination, the country was being flooded with violent programs that bore no relationship to day to day Canadian realities—and perhaps even less relationship to our historical traditions.

The minister concluded by saying that American domination—and the concomitant violence of programing—is an obvious cultural problem which will only be solved in the long term by developing Canadian alternatives that are attractive to Canadian viewers. This is one of the most important points I should like to make.

I think it is now widely agreed that this will be one of the major challenges to be faced by our broadcasting system—at least in English Canada—in the coming years. Here we could perhaps take a lesson from our French Canadian colleagues. The LaMarsh Commission has presented an elaborate and somewhat revolutionary plan for accomplishing this goal, certainly judging from the reaction it received. The president of the CBC, Mr. Johnson, has recently published his objectives in this regard which call, among other things, for Canadianizing the airwaves, and about time, I say.

If I am correct in stating that there is widespread agreement on the nature of the problems which are facing our broadcasting system, I think I am also correct in stating that there is widespread recognition that there are a number of serious considerations which would stand in the way of any attempt to deal with these problems.

First of all, there is popularity to be considered. Really, how popular is violence? Many would argue that there is considerable popular demand for violent programing, and that shows which feature this type of programing often do quite well in the ratings game. Unfortunately it is not possible to provide a comprehensive assessment of this argument. At the present time the relationship between ratings, popularity, and public attitudes is not well understood. Nevertheless one point should be made. In the first place it is important to note that violent programs are not as overwhelmingly popular as is generally supposed. I think that probably has to be encouraging in terms of the best of what we suspect of human nature.

The spring 1976 Bureau of Broadcast Measurement findings demonstrate that there were no violent programs among the ten most popular shows, and only three in the top twenty. Secondly, even if a violent program achieves a very high rating—say a 20—all that this indicates is that 20 per cent of the population is watching it. If that sounds like a funny statement, let me explain.

Beyond this, it is possible to argue that the ratings of violent programs are artificially inflated, that is, they are packed into prime time. Prime time television is overwhelmingly dominated by violent programing. On most stations, little else is available, and this means that it is often difficult, if not impossible, to switch channels to other less violent programs. Under these circumstances, it would not be surprising if such programing did well in the ratings. To the contrary, it would be surprising if it did not do extremely well. Yet violent programs are not nearly as popular as non-violent programs,

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regardless of their availability. If this line of reasoning is pursued, it suggests that the present ratings of violent programs would fall even lower if genuine alternatives were available, and we hope that is one of the most important parts of the answer and a situation which we will see come to pass. That is one of the very real points.

The second of many considerations that could be raised involves the reality of hard economic facts, and there are some real ones with which we have to deal. I would not suggest for a minute that this is a prime consideration. Given a choice, I think that we have to think in terms of the moral value of our broadcasting. We have to think of good taste, and so on, and certainly we have to put economic facts second and find a way to do what is right. But these considerations are there, not only for parliament and for the broadcasting industry, but they are there for every Canadian to consider and on which to make up his mind and take a stand.

As we know, Canada has a very small market, and at the same time we want as much Canadian content as possible—something in the area of 60 per cent. This means that we may have to make sacrifices, we may have to think in terms of subsidies. At present our subsidies are of two kinds: one from the government—this is a problem which perhaps the Canadian people have not come to grips with—and the second from foreign shows. It is a simple fact that to have the desired amount and quality of broadcasting of Canadian content we must have foreign shows at present to subsidize our Canadian shows. The cost of shows is in the ratio of \$2,000 for half an hour of an American show to \$60,000 for half an hour of a Canadian show. This is just to give you some idea of the extent of the problem. This is our dilemma. Undoubtedly some violence is popular. It is on both the United States and Canadian channels. If we eliminate it on Canadian channels, many of our people will switch to the American channels and see it anyway.

Mr. McGrath: It could be blacked out.

Mr. Philbrook: That is another serious subject—blacking it out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. Because of an order made earlier today, I must interrupt the hon. member to say the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Ross Milne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the vast majority of members in the House would join me in congratulating the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) for bringing this bill forward, and perhaps would share the viewpoint of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) and the hon. member for Restigouche (Mr. Harquail) that the substance of this bill might be referred to committee.

I would not want anyone—particularly the hon. member for St. John's East—to think that those who have participated in the debate are the only ones interested. I think that from time to time the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Ethier), the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier),