

Broadcasting Act

war is far too important to be left to those who are engaged in commerce. In both cases the victims should have something to say.

I want now to say something about the people on the other side of the fence, the victims of commercial advertising. I will say no more about the children at this point; the hon. member for St. John's East covered that subject very adequately. I have two pieces of evidence from parents groups, one of which is located in the city of Ottawa. The Citizen's Committee on Children sent a brief to all members on January 28 of this year on the subject of television advertising that was directed to children. Their brief pointed out that most advertisements directed to children are not only socially useless but are positively destructive of the values that many parents want to encourage. That is a reference to values other than material things such as toys or food that are commercially advertised on television.

The brief goes on to say that television advertisers, through attractive audio-visual techniques and continual repetition, create real desire in the child, thereby calculatingly utilizing children to bring pressure on their parents to buy the products advertised. For example, I may say they use Yogi Bear to tell the children that since the children are pals of Yogi Bear they should go along with him and get after their parents to buy cornflakes or some other kind of breakfast food that the advertisers want to sell. The brief goes on to point out that the television networks and local station managers are unlikely to refuse voluntarily this important source of revenue. I think that to expect them to do so would be rather like inviting one to give up one's lifeblood. To expect television stations to sacrifice this revenue and to consider the well-being of the community is just too much. The brief puts forward this resolution:

Be it resolved, that the Citizens' Committee on Children request the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to introduce legislation; and the Canadian Radio-Television Commission to amend existing regulations—

- (1) to eliminate commercialism, but allow underwriting of children's television programmes.
- (2) to prohibit all advertising material from programmes, or blocks of programmes, specifically designed for the pre-schooler.
- (3) to remove spot commercial advertisements and
- (4) to restrict public service announcements and programme promotion trailers to those topics pertaining to children's needs and interests, when the majority of the viewing audience is under 12 years of age.

This brief was submitted last January. Since the voluntary code is now out, I think we should go to the lengths proposed by the hon. member for St. John's East and provide, in the words of this bill, that no advertisements shall be permitted during the broadcasting of a program devoted to children. The other piece of evidence from parents is from Montreal in the form of a newspaper article of October 15 last. It reads as follows:

● (4:30 p.m.)

Guidelines controlling advertisements aimed at children have received a lukewarm reaction from a group of citizens dedicated to abolishing such advertisements.

"The guidelines lessen the evil, but we want the evil to disappear completely," said Marie Vallée spokesman for the Movement

[Mrs. MacInnis.]

pour l'Abolition de la Publicité aux Enfants—Movement to Abolish Advertisements Aimed at Children.

"Our aim is nothing short of the abolition of publicity aimed at children," she added.

The code of advertising to children announced on Wednesday by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, was adopted voluntarily by CAB members.

Praised by consumers affairs minister Ronald Basford, the code requires radio and television advertising for children not to exaggerate the quality of products or service and to avoid undue pressure on parents.

As I say, I do not think that goes far enough. The hon. member for St. John's East made a further important point when he indicated that advertising commercials may well be responsible for a great deal of the dissatisfaction and turning away from the continual preoccupation with material interests that we see in so many of the younger people today. This television advertising may also be responsible for the extreme cynicism of children today. If you have known a child who had seen a toy advertised and then saw one in a store or got one for Christmas, and had it break down, indicating it was far less in quality than indicated during the advertisement on TV, you would appreciate the depth of cynicism that can be inculcated in children today.

A woman said to me the other day that she had noticed another thing in advertisements which is of importance. She said her little child came home and asked about the toy that she had on television and that had been bought for her. She said another little girl had told her that the toy cost only \$1.95 but that her mother got one for \$3.95 which was a far better toy. This is the sort of emphasis on competition and antisocial values imparted to children by television. This is the result, very largely, of television advertisements.

One further thing which has not been mentioned regarding television is the amount of violence inculcated in children when they see these weird animals running around, doing each other in, throwing each other off mountain tops and shooting at each other with guns. This all seems unrealistic and fairy tale-like. But this is only one step from watching cowboys running around, shooting up the town, or people dropping bombs and doing other things to each other which is beginning to be expected today as a regular occurrence. If a child is unable to get anything but that on television, he is unable to distinguish in his early years between fact and fantasy. When he grows up he is still unable to distinguish fact from fantasy. I would warrant that the man who recently hijacked an aircraft near Calgary was not very far from being unable to distinguish between fact and fantasy. He acted like a schizophrenic child.

I think commercial advertisements on television are thoroughly bad for children. I think they are bad for grown-ups too, but we can deal with that another day. In the meantime, I hope the House will give serious consideration to sending the subject matter of this bill to a committee. I should like to see it sent to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, on which committee both the hon. member for St. John's East and I sit and at into which the minister can be drawn in order that we may brainwash him a little more thoroughly in this regard. Perhaps at such a committee session we could go over these things thoroughly to make sure we not only