

• (4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Nielsen: Had it not been for the Conservative government under the former prime minister, there would be no private television in this country today. However, many of the best programs are broadcast over the private sector. We gave private television the opportunity to exist, and I believe private television is doing a good job in this country. This bill, if it is accepted in its present form, would relegate private television and private broadcasting to the back rooms in the decision making process. Indeed under this bill the private sector may be required to program anything that the executive committee might, to use the words of section 18, deem of special significance to Canadians. Who makes that decision? The executive committee does.

Mr. Churchill: Or the cabinet.

Mr. Nielsen: Or the cabinet, or the minister. The executive committee can literally tell any station in the private sector, "Well, we believe this program to be of special significance to Canadians, so you carry it." If the station does not, the result may be a \$100,000 fine. Private television and radio are placed in the position where they must first come with their hats in their hands and placate the C.B.C. Then they must go on their hands and knees to this all powerful commission to which the members are appointed for seven years and from which they cannot be dislodged for seven years.

Private radio and television must appeal for mercy, for the right to live or the right to perform a service that I believe is on a great deal higher level than the parliamentary secretary, who spoke last, indicated. If these private stations do not do as they are told, if they are recalcitrant, then they can be fined \$100,000. This is the big stick that will be wielded over private broadcasters, so they will not talk back. They will not even breathe back at this all-powerful executive committee.

Where does the power reside in this commission? It resides in the five members of the executive committee; that is where the power is, and they are in close consultation with the minister. We have the possibility and the strong probability under this set-up of direct intervention by government in every aspect of broadcasting. This of course is the dream of the Liberal party, to take over control, to regiment. This bill, if passed, will do nothing more nor less than set up a system of

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thought police in broadcasting. Not even the N.D.P. in their wildest dreams of a socialist heaven would dare lay the heavy hand of direct government control so heavily on the communications facilities of this nation.

Mr. Lewis: May I ask the hon. member a question? He will not object if we quote this generous statement of his?

Mr. Churchill: It just means you are not as bad as the Liberals.

Mr. Nielsen: Why are they calling it the Canadian radio commission? I believe the answer is very simple. It has nothing to do with bilingualism, as one of our members said the other day. If bilingualism rests on anything so shallow as the change in name from the Board of Broadcast Governors to the Canadian radio commission, simply because that name sounds the same in both languages, then we are in even more serious trouble than I thought. This change is sought because this government knows, and I believe the Canadian people know, that the most powerful medium of communications in Canada today, indeed in any country today, is television. This government wants to avoid any hint or any shadow of a suggestion that it is setting up a device which will in fact allow it to exercise supreme and total control over television broadcasting in this nation. That is exactly what this bill does. This is why the word "television" does not even appear in the title of the bill. It should be called the television control act, in my submission, because that is precisely what it does.

Mr. Turner: What is that in French?

Mr. Nielsen: I do not know what it is in French. I readily admit that I do not know how to speak French. I know what is being said about me when I am in the elevator, so things are not said now when I go in and out of the elevator. And now that the Registrar General (Mr. Turner) has raised the matter, I do not believe it is shameful to admit a lack in the other language. I would dearly love to be able to speak ten languages, but I cannot do that. I speak two languages.

The granting of licences, the revoking of licences, the renewal of licences, indeed the very programs which will appear, the scheduling of programs and their content, political broadcasts—all of these are under the direct control of this five man broadcasting junta; that is what it is. If they do not like I Love Lucy, off it goes. More important, if