

Interim Supply

aches of supervising a public broadcasting system if he could possibly avoid it.

This is what we have been hearing during the last three days. I think it is time we took a hard look at the difficulties we encounter in the supervision of this public broadcasting system. The C.B.C. was set up, as we know, in 1932 under the Bennett government and approved without dissension. But things have changed a great deal since those days. They have changed even since Mr. Fowler's report was made. We have entered the jet age, a new age of electronics. In 1957, at the time of this report, it was suggested we could not have a private television network because we could not afford one. What happened a few short years later, when franchises were made available for additional television stations in some of our major cities? There was really keen competition to get these stations. I think we should remember, too, that the Canadian broadcasting system was not set up by government alone. Even in the earlier days of radio and television they depended on private operators in certain cities to link in with their network to provide coverage across Canada. This surely should be the role of government—to supervise the broadcasting industry, to make regulations to ensure that the content of our television is Canadian, at least to a major extent. It should have some responsibility for seeing that communication is established with remote areas of Canada. These are responsibilities which rest on government in the broadcasting field.

In the years before 1957 we did not have a board of broadcast governors. We now have a board set up by parliament to regulate broadcasting in Canada. It does not matter what government is in power; it does not matter whether you have a committee set up to investigate the C.B.C. or not, there will be all kinds of complaints every time the C.B.C. shows a film which a block of the population does not like. It is not the function of government to push culture down somebody's throat. Culture is not generated that way; it has to be developed from the bottom, up. You do not suppress perversion by exploiting it; you do not suppress minority and hate literature by exploiting that. The C.B.C. has taken it unto itself to become a little government all its own. There can be no control by parliament, as the hon. member for Calgary North so ably pointed out yesterday. Parliament has no control over this monolithic giant which has grown up, like Topsy.

It is a very good question, whether or not parliament should have control over the programming of our broadcast system, as long

as it meets certain standards. It is very easy to say to a government in power that it has twisted the arm of a government corporation to suppress a film or to show a film. Are we to go back to the example of dictator-like countries, where they all have a national broadcasting system which is primarily a propaganda instrument to keep governments in power?

The time has come when we should have a reorganization of our broadcasting facilities in Canada. We should take advantage of the board of broadcast governors and allow them to regulate broadcasting. If some television network steps out of line, this is the board which should be stepping on it. If we did that we could immediately save ourselves, not the entire \$100 million, but a substantial part of it. I say this because I think the C.B.C. should continue in force, first to administer its overseas network, to provide a radio and television coverage in a mechanical way—I mean by this, technical facilities—and, second, to provide communication with the remote areas of Canada. We could immediately save ourselves at least \$80 million a year. We could put up for sale the C.B.C. stations which are now operating in our major centres. We could add to the capital account of the federal government many millions of dollars through selling these tools used to do a job which should be done by private enterprise in any case. Put up the one in Edmonton; it would be sold very readily. Put up the one in Ottawa. Put up the stations in Toronto and Montreal.

In 1957, Mr. Fowler said:

We are satisfied that the volume of advertising revenue available in Canada is not in itself sufficient to pay for a Canadian broadcasting system.

This has been shown to be wrong. There is enough revenue to pay for another network and there is enough revenue in Canada to pay for competing networks. The situation is there in a nutshell. Allow the C.B.C. to continue to provide films through the national film board. If they want to take it over, that is all right with me because I do not think we need these different divisions in government. All that it does is add new buildings and more people doing paperwork. The national film board is responsible for advising the governor in council on film activities and is authorized to produce and distribute films in the national interest, in particular, films designed to interpret Canada to Canadians and to other nations. Surely we have a vehicle here in the national film board to interpret Canada to Canadians. This is one of the