

*Canadian Broadcasting Act*

they are for government departments. In broadcasting, particularly in Canada, there are and probably always will be many demands from different sections of the public for more of something, particularly in the program field where there are many different opinions about what expenditures are necessary. It seems to me the sensible thing for parliament to do is to tell the corporation what are its sources of revenue for five years, setting a reasonable amount in relation to the economy of the country. Then it is the responsibility of the corporation to spend that money to the greatest possible advantage, subject always to a review by parliament.

The bill also lays down legal provisions regarding the right of notice for broadcasters and the right of hearing by the board of governors on matters directly affecting them. In addition there is laid down a right of appeal by private stations to the Exchequer Court of Canada on questions of law against suspension orders by the corporation. There is, however, no change in the general co-ordinating position of the C.B.C.

I have been very interested in some speeches on broadcasting by members of the Progressive Conservative party in recent years, and sometimes a little entertained by them. I have been glad to hear these speakers take pride in the national broadcasting system of Canada, and pride in the part the Conservative government had in setting up the system originally. Sometimes, however, they seem to forget that when the system was first set up under their government it had the same and even greater co-ordinating powers over all broadcasting in the country than it has at present. For years they seemed to agree with us and other parties on the principle of control being vested in one single body responsible to parliament.

Proposals for a separate regulating body have been promoted vigorously in the last few years by some, though not all, of the private stations. In view of the many and often conflicting proposals advanced, this government thought it wise to have the whole matter studied thoroughly by an impartial body to ascertain if possibly changed conditions had made a different system of control desirable. This whole question was very carefully studied by the Massey commission, which was quite impartial in its approach to the question and examined it in relation to the broadcasting needs of this country in a very thorough way. I should like to read some of the observations of the commission on this matter. At page 285 of its report,

after referring to the variety of proposals for a new separate control body, the commission says:

We have considered these proposals and find that they would either divide and destroy, or merely duplicate the present system of national control. Legislation to set up a separate regulatory body would alter the present national system and would result in two independent groups of radio broadcasting stations, one public and one private. The C.B.C. would no longer have the control over all clear channels considered necessary to ensure national coverage. This matter might be arranged but the C.B.C. would still lose the outlets through private stations which are equally necessary for national coverage under existing conditions. Moreover, if the two groups of stations were to be considered as on a parity it would be impossible to refuse network privileges to private broadcasters, with consequences which we shall mention later. A completely separate body treating public and private radio broadcasting with judicial impartiality could not fail to destroy the present system upon which we depend for national coverage with national programs.

But, it may be argued, such a body would have the power to improve but not to destroy. It could concern itself with the programs of public and of private stations and strive for the improvement of both in the public interest. The theory may sound plausible, but we doubt whether it would be effective in practice.

And further down on page 286:

The public quite properly requires a higher standard for public than for private programs. But as the completely separate regulatory body contemplated must treat all alike, its activities might well have the effect of reconciling the C.B.C. to relatively low commercial standards rather than of raising the programs of both the C.B.C. and of private stations to a higher level.

It is conceivable that some who might favour a separate regulatory body assume that such an authority would have the duty of securing the necessary channels and sufficient outlets for national sustaining programs. Such an arrangement would be completely inconsistent with the notion of a separate regulatory body holding the balance between public and private stations. The regulatory power would then become merely an agent for the C.B.C. in securing coverage for national programs. It would, in fact, parallel in power and responsibility the present board of governors of the C.B.C.

We must return then to the statement that a new regulatory body would either destroy or duplicate the present national system of control. If the national system were not to be destroyed, a separate body could do only what the present board of governors is supposed to do. If it did not mark the end of the national system it could not possibly be "the separate and completely impartial body not connected in any way with the C.B.C." which the C.A.B. has requested.

In its first formal recommendation on broadcasting, the commission goes on to state that the present system of control of broadcasting in Canada should be continued. Mr. Speaker, I think these findings of the commission are sound. I should think they would be convincing to anyone who studied and thought about the realities of broadcasting in Canada. It is completely illogical to try to