

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

that it will halt all tobacco advertising on its radio and television networks when current advertising contracts with the tobacco companies expire.

I do not have to be reminded that the board has the power to adopt the course it has taken. I stand here to remind the board that such licence is not in itself justification and that such power must be exercised equitably. In view of the circumstances surrounding this decision, the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) owes the large number of Canadians who have a vital interest in the tobacco industry something more than the stock answer that he only reports to parliament for the C.B.C. It is not enough to give them the threadbare assurance that he will bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Directors. In his position as the mouthpiece of the C.B.C. in parliament, I submit he has a very special duty in this case to add a personal postscript, namely that corrective action is to be expected.

By orders of reference dated November 29, 1968, the subject matter of six private member's bills dealing with tobacco and cigarettes was referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Services. The committee commenced its hearings on December 19, 1968 and the first witness called was the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) who said, as recorded on page 130 of the evidence:

This committee should look at all possible ways that cigarette advertising can be strongly controlled.

Dozens of witnesses have been heard, hundreds of pages of evidence have been transcribed and the proceedings are expected to continue for some time. The President of the C.B.C. told the members of the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts on May 8, that the directors reached their decision to ban all tobacco advertising on radio and television without calling any witnesses, since they had the evidence of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs. The president failed to mention how and when the matter was placed on the agenda or the measures he took to ensure that each of the directors was sufficiently informed of the evidence to make such an important decision. I would be reluctant to think that the directors were guided to their conclusion.

• (10:00 p.m.)

None the less, a conclusion based on such evidence is almost incomprehensible, since

[Mr. Stafford.]

the proceedings of the standing committee are still in progress and the committee, until this evening, has heard only those witnesses who strongly oppose the use of tobacco. At the time of the board's decision the witnesses for the other side, including the tobacco industry, had not been called. Even in the imagination it would be difficult to envisage a more arbitrary and irresponsible decision. It contravenes all the canons of common courtesy and good faith. The Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) should point out to the directors of the C.B.C. that Canadians will not for long tolerate bureaucrats who are insensible to the interests of all parties.

But as impossible as it may seem at this moment there is an even more serious aspect to this decision. The decision was made in the midst of the hearings of the standing committee whose task it is to decide this very point. It was an affront to parliament. It was a demonstration of bureaucratic power at its very worst.

The decision is even more difficult to comprehend when one considers the evidence of Marcel Ouimet, Vice-Chairman of Programming for the C.B.C., on February 6, as set out at page 425 of the committee proceedings:

The corporation has in the past given consideration to the effects of withdrawing completely from cigarette advertising, but has come to the conclusion that the isolation of the C.B.C. in this field would do little actually to modify the attitudes to cigarette smoking.

While the decision will do little actually to modify the attitudes of people to cigarette smoking, it will certainly modify the revenues of the C.B.C. by a drop of \$700,000. It may be that the vice-chairman was reflecting on the situation in England where cigarette sales have had a steady increase each year since cigarette advertising on radio and television was banned in 1965.

Among government departments, there is considerable variation in policy regarding tobacco. One department provides films for anti-smoking commercials; another provides advice and guidance to growers; another helps promote its sale. Now, the C.B.C., a subsidized—perhaps I might add a generously subsidized—crown corporation, has banned all tobacco advertising on radio and television.

The Delhi Tobacco Research Station carries out research work on flue-cured tobacco and recommends cultural practices to help farmers improve the yield and quality of their tobacco crops. The Harrow Experimental Farm works on cultural aspects and improvements in curing burly tobacco.