

Canadian Broadcasting Policy

in broadcasting as in other spheres of activity, when a government does not comply with the wishes of the people, it is defeated; similarly, when the head of an undertaking does not meet the needs, the wishes of his customers, he is doomed to failure. The role of the C.B.C. is not to tell the people what to do but rather to inform them as objectively as possible.

In this respect, may I submit respectfully that, to my mind, the public network has, to a large extent, unfortunately failed in the task assigned to it.

● (5:50 p.m.)

I simply wish at this point to quote a statement made last month by someone whose views on the information media I highly respect, Mr. Jean-Louis Gagnon. I quote:

But before laying down a rule of conduct for private stations, above all it will be necessary that parliament or the B.B.G. (if such authority is vested in it) manage to inform the C.B.C. that the survival of our country, among other things, is in the public interest.

Mr. Chairman, I endorse that statement. I do not intend to comment on what is going on within the state-owned network, but in my opinion, a change in leadership and new instructions are imperative. In short, those responsible for programming and public affairs should start by reading the foundation chart of the C.B.C., whose prime object is to ensure the development of the Canadian nation as a whole. In my opinion, that has not been done, and attempts are generally made to put a stop to our growth.

The other day, Mr. Chairman—and this is significant of what public opinion can be—during a meeting I attended, everyone was critical and voiced his fear, his concern, and especially stated that life in Canada must, in general, have something better to offer than programs where former convicts are confronted with representatives of the clergy, judges and policemen.

Mr. Chairman, I do not know really what could be done in that field, but there must be some way to solve the problem. It is not a question of setting up some authority which will curb healthy aspirations, but since the main purpose of the crown corporation is to guide thinking, the latter should be directed along the same lines as the objectives of the corporation which are primarily to give information with the greatest amount of objectivity and not to control information and use it as an instrument of propaganda,

[Mr. Laflamme.]

which, I think, is the general reproach that could be made.

I imagine that when the bill is introduced in the house we will be able to see better whether the government or parliament intends to give new directives to our crown corporation, which has played an essential role and must continue to do so, without being infiltrated by any group.

Moreover, like my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), I will say that the corporation must not be French and English and French only where there are French Canadians. It must be French from Vancouver to Halifax because how can a French-speaking Canadian who spends a few days in an essentially English community feel at home if he cannot even hear a program or the news in his own language on radio or television?

I think that is a duty, a bounden duty of the central government, because then the public corporation will play the prominent part devolved upon it and which is defined in section 1 of its charter: to promote Canadian nationalism, Canadian duality or at least Canadian identity, which must be the prime objective of the national network. I hope that the bill which will be introduced will enable us to see to it that our national corporation plays this role.

[*English*]

Mr. Orlikow: Six o'clock.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Orlikow: I thought I might call it six o'clock but I heard somebody say "No" so I suppose I should begin.

Like my hon. friend from New Westminster I thought that the statement the Secretary of State made in introducing this resolution was an amazing one. Here we have legislation which has been promised and discussed for at least two years, legislation of tremendous importance in this field; yet I think I know less about the essential principles which the bill will contain than I thought I knew when the day began.

It is true the minister said the things which I suppose government spokesmen and representatives of every responsible party have said about broadcasting and television. She made the same kind of speech as Mr. Bennett made 30 or 40 years ago.

Miss LaMarsh: If you would sit down you would see the bill in two minutes.