

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

Wholesale dismissals or demotion of people alleged to hold separatist views might well lead to protests that politicians and parliament and C.B.C. management, for that matter, were interfering along lines which have often been criticized in the past and were, in fact, imposing some kind of state control over news by undermining the independence of the disseminators of news. This is something which should be borne in mind.

There is a further element involved. I submit it is possible for a reporter, whether for television or a newspaper, to hold certain views which he is able in his own mind to separate from his attitude to his job as a newsmen.

In the same paper, the *Gazette* of Thursday, November 2, there is an article by Claude Arpin in which some views are expressed on this question—Radio-Canada and Quebec.

One English speaking newsmen said "I wouldn't hesitate a minute in hiring a separatist if he were a top reporter."

"And as far as this place is concerned," he continued, "I'd worry if we didn't have a few separatists on the French side; after all, we need intelligent, sensitive and inquisitive people in news and that kind of person is usually desperately involved in life around him. And if he happens to be French Canadian, he'll most likely be involved with the preservation of his culture and language."

#### The writer comments:

This kind of solidarity on the part of English speaking C.B.C. employees in the face of current criticism against Radio-Canada seems fairly widespread.

Granted this is a conclusion drawn after speaking with the rank and file personnel; editors and programme directors—because of their vulnerability to public disapproval—won't venture opinions. They refer you to the corporation's PR men who repeat what vice-president Ouimet has said about separatists and their alleged presence at Radio Canada:

"A thorough investigation into the matter has already been initiated."

He is quoting authorities within the C.B.C. The writer goes on:

That there are French Canadians at Radio-Canada who hold nationalistic, "independentiste" or even separatist views is highly probable.

What isn't as likely, however, is that these people successfully use the corporation's broadcasting facilities to diffuse their propaganda across the province.

Then the writer gives an example.

"Suppose I'm a militant separatist," argued a French Canadian writer. "My assignment editor gives me a job and I come back and write it for broadcasting over both radio and TV. Now my story, before going out to the public, has to be approved by a news editor and by a program director for both media. That means four people look it over.

"So by the time my original story reaches the newscaster, it has been edited into a straight news item. The newscaster reads what is on the paper and then the paper is sent to Ottawa where it is filed. That incidentally—the filing system—is ample incentive for editors to make sure our newscasts aren't separatist propaganda."

The article goes on to say there are many competent people in the news department of the C.B.C., people who are proud of their role as newsmen and who recognize their obligations. So all these factors have to be considered. If retaliatory action is taken to clean out separatists and sympathizers without regard to the considerations I have mentioned, more harm would be done than good. Martyrs might be created. This brings us, again, to René Levesque to whom reference was made earlier. It seems to me that the C.B.C. strike some years ago was the big happening which launched him upon public awareness. We should not forget that it is possible to make martyrs of these people and win sympathy for the views they espouse. There is also the factor that we must not appear as though we are trying in a militant, dictatorial way, to restrict one viewpoint and have some type of censorship exercised at the top.

• (3:20 p.m.)

The third point we must recognize is that some of these men against whom allegations have been directed are men capable of separating their two functions, their personal beliefs from the role they fulfil. When confronted by these problems it is not difficult to see the hesitancy that not only the C.B.C. but we as politicians must and are exhibiting.

It is always a nice thing to look into our own house and put it in order before we are excessively critical of somebody else's. For instance, the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Gregoire) sits in this house as a member of parliament; yet he is espousing the separatist cause which, if successful, would totally undermine and destroy our country. As I say, he sits in our House of Commons. He has probably broken every major principle of his oath as a member. What have we, as politicians in this house, done about it? He is over in France preaching what is tantamount to treason in terms of inviting outside influences to assist him in the destruction of this country. What type of housecleaning have we done in our parliament to take care of this situation?

**Mr. Prittie:** On reflection would the hon. member not consider that the word "treason" is a bit strong in this case?