

Mr. Davidson: We are looking for men and women of integrity who, regardless of their political colouration, recognize that they have a professional obligation to perform their professional functions for their employer in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the employer as set out in the mandate.

Now, when the individual begins to let his political slant, political prejudices, his political inclinations, show and reflect themselves in his professional broadcasting function, it is at that point that the Corporation as the employer of that individual must become concerned. But the political convictions—I repeat, the individual political convictions of the individual employed at the Corporation, as long as there is no law of Canada making it a crime or an offence to profess his particular political beliefs, his political beliefs are and can be of no official concern to the Corporation. He can be Liberal, he can be a Conservative. He can be a Creditiste. He can be a Socialist. He can be a Separatist by political conviction.

It is only when he begins to reflect those political convictions and to exploit our airwaves to advance his political cause—It's at that point that we must draw the line.

Senator Beaubien: Have there been any cases of that, Dr. Davidson?

Mr. Davidson: We have had to relieve a number of individuals of their employment with us.

The Chairman: At earlier hearings, it has been stated by a number of people that the working press in Canada tends to have a small "l" liberal bias. Would you agree with that statement? Does it pertain to CBC? Would the working press at the CBC have a small "l" liberal bias?

Mr. Davidson: I don't know what I would feel that that was a generalization that you could apply across the board. I think that the working press has a healthy scepticism of all things related to the establishment, whatever that may be, but I can recall the CBC being under attack under all different administrations that we have had in this country, for being against the government, whatever government it might be from time to time, and on the basis of the...

The Chairman: It has also, incidentally, been argued it is the function of the working press to be against the government.

Mr. Davidson: Well, I think we come closer to fulfilling our mandate in that direction that we do in some other areas of our mandate that I could mention. It is the function of broadcasting organizations such as ours, I believe, to make people think, to provoke, within a degree, responsible controversy and argument about the public issues of the day, and you are certainly not going to do that typically if you become merely the pale shadow and echo of the government's policy on a wide variety of issues. We challenge in many cases the established position of government, both provincial and federal. This is a pretty hazardous thing to do, but it is part of our responsibility.

The Chairman: It says on page 8 of your brief, in the last paragraph:

"The Corporation would be failing in its duty if it were to favour certain options by giving them undue publicity or by eliminating contradictory opinions. As a news medium, the CBC cannot be a propaganda for any cause."

Not even for the cause of national unity?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, yes, by its mandate, it must operate in such a way as to strengthen national unity in this country.

The Chairman: Do you think it does?

Mr. Davidson: I think an argument could be made that we make a very significant contribution to the national unity in the non-political sense.

Too many people, if I may say so, with respect, tend to interpret the expression in the Broadcasting Act in the political sense. I think that we can produce evidence to show that in the cross-fertilization, that we provide through our programming, of the attitudes and the way of life and outlook of different people in different parts of the country, by our regional exchanges, by throwing light on the life and culture of Canadians living in all parts of this country, I think we are providing broadcast material and programming that does strengthen the fabric of our Canadian society.

The Chairman: Do you think that in your French service on television that you are—Perhaps I should put this to Mr. David.

Do you think that you are reflecting to the rest of Canada, let's say, the problems, for example, on the Prairies? Are you doing a