

Radio and Television

Mr. Thomas: Is he advocating a board of control over our national system which would fail to exercise judgment concerning the moral content of the programs that are broadcast?

Mr. Fisher: In reply I should like to state very briefly that if the hon. member would look at the speech made by the member to whom I referred he will see that he spelled out very clearly certain criticisms that reminded me very much of communist China, where they are always going through an orgy of self-criticism. I feel that to spell out censorship in such terms with relation to a regulatory body is bad. Certainly I would expect that in general the regulatory body would express certain ideas to the management of the C.B.C. and any of the other stations about the content of programs. However, I would hope that it would not be a formal job of theirs, that in essence it would be a minor aspect of their duties and that such action as they might take would be advisory rather than regulatory.

(Translation):

Mr. Guy Rouleau (Dollard): Mr. Speaker, last night, at ten o'clock, the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Pigeon) moved the adjournment of the debate. I expected him this afternoon to conclude his speech but, for some reason best known to himself, he has not seen fit to do so. There are a few questions that I would have liked to put to him after he was through. So, I now ask him if he would allow me to ask three questions of him.

Mr. Pigeon: With pleasure.

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot permit it even if the hon. member will permit it. He has spoken on this motion and he is not permitted to speak again. The hon. member is free to make his own speech.

Mr. Rouleau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Translation):

Mr. Speaker, a little later I shall reply to the remarks made yesterday by the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm. Among other things, he asked the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Nowlan) to set up a board of censorship in order to rate television programs and safeguard, as he said, the rights of morality. Well, if the hon. member wants to protect the rights of morality, I would strongly advise him to do so in the various constituencies of the province where, as he knows, there are speak-easies.

At the moment I should like to call the attention of the house to the fact that the amendment proposed by the Leader of the

Opposition (Mr. Pearson), with regard to radio and television, is altogether relevant and timely.

When Conservative members were in the opposition, they never missed a chance to charge the government with interference in matters relating to radio and television. When Conservative members were in the opposition, they spent their time in recriminations and complaints that their party was not being allowed the air-time to which it was entitled over radio and T.V. Meanwhile other members, on the government side, were harping on the same string, claiming that Conservatives were being allowed too much time on radio and T.V.

Any man with strong convictions will always feel that members of opposite parties are allowed too much time over the state-controlled radio and television. Now that we are in the opposition, we find the situation has not changed. For instance, when the Prime Minister of Great Britain came here to address the House of Commons, the cameras were aimed solely at government benches. It was overlooked that in a democracy, the parliament is made up of both a government and an opposition.

The only consolation we had in watching that program on T.V. was to see on the screen this charming lady who is the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mrs. Fairclough).

(Text):

I was just saying, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, that the other day when the Prime Minister of Great Britain addressed the House of Commons only the government side of the house was shown on television, but we took great pleasure in looking at the charming lady who is Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

(Translation):

When they sat in opposition, Mr. Speaker, our Conservative friends were forever clamouring for a regulatory body for the control of private and public broadcasting. And while the Conservatives were busy running down the government, and making demands, the government of the day set up the Fowler commission and gave it the responsibility of inquiring into the problems that faced private and government broadcasting. The Fowler report, published just before the June 1957 election, contains conclusions which the government should consider seriously and adopt in their entirety.

The Liberal party's policy with regard to radio and television was clearly set out yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition. As