

The Chairman: Mr. Mather, I do not mind the Minister answering that question. I guess the answer is either a yes or no, but that is not the purpose of these meetings of the committee. We have a particular reference before us and I do not believe that it would be an appropriate time, in this series of hearings at least, for her to do that. Perhaps she might want to answer your question, yes or no.

Mr. Mather: Before the Minister answers—if she does—I just say again that my ability to...

Mr. Fairweather: Mr. Chairman am I deaf or am I going through a change of life? I cannot hear either the Minister or Mr. Mather, and I am only 44. . .

Mr. Mather: If you will permit me to repeat my question and, if I may, put in my preamble, we meet today to consider this proposed legislation in regard to a broadcasting policy for Canada. As one member of this Committee I find my ability to do that affected by the controversy which is now raging between the Minister and the CBC leadership. The Minister has said that she is not responsible to answer the criticisms of the CBC leadership; she is responsible to Parliament. In my view this Committee is representative of Parliament and my question is, therefore: Would the Minister consider acquainting this Committee with the information and counsel which she might give us in relation to the CBC management, and her ideas of improving it.

The Chairman has allowed me to ask the question; he points out that we are not really dealing with this sort of thing this morning; I simply say again that my ability to deal with the legislation is affected by this issue. I ask the Minister whether she could say what her views on this are.

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, I do not think the repetition of the information which has been brought to me can be dealt with by this Committee; it would just be another Seven Days investigation. You know, the Corporation frequently says that it is investigated to death, but one of the reasons it keeps being investigated, I suppose, is because the results of the Glassco Commission and the Fowler Commission and, from all I hear, the results of the President's own study committee, have been brushed aside. If

this controversy has done any good—aside from just my saying what everybody else has said...

An hon. Member: Except in a more colourful way.

Miss LaMarsh: . . . and being the focal point for the reaction against that—I think it may have borne in upon some of the management of the CBC for the first time that it is not enough for the people to spend a great deal of money and to have study after study after study, and simply answer it, "Oh, they do not know what they are talking about; we are the experts", and go on as they did before. I think there are some within the Corporation who awoke with a start from the last two weeks, and I think that is likely to be very helpful. But for me to name names and circumstances, cannot, I think, do anything but cause distress to the people named, some of whom are still within the Corporation, and some without. It would not be a constructive thing to do; it would just look like backbiting and office politics in a lot of ways. I did not make notes of what I was told; I would want to be absolutely exact in what I said. I think it is much preferable to bring to the new management these individuals themselves. The new management will have an opportunity to assess the weight and the importance of what the individual says, and to take such action. You see, there is not any way outside the Corporation that we can run it; we are not supposed to. It is supposed to be independent. What are we distressed about is that it is quite obvious, inside and outside the House, that it is not getting run. We want the Corporation, we believe in it; we are heartsick over the fact that it is not doing what it ought to do. I think the only way, Mr. Chairman, if I felt it would be effective in reaching the goal all of us have with respect to the Corporation, would be to parade out the names of the witnesses, but this would just be the most damaging thing to any officer who had to report to Parliament in the future. For me simply to give you the litany without the support of the people who know would be merely to pit my word against the word of others who have access to a very important medium, at least. Another good thing, I think, is the fact that for the first time we have had television cameras in the CBC headquarters.