

### *Broadcasting Guidelines*

I am concerned with a government which has the concern of people at heart and yet takes this type of callous attitude toward something as serious as the growth and development of our children. I am reminded of the discussions we have had in this House during the last six months precipitated by the Hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) regarding his concern about saccharin. We had good reason to challenge the minister on his unilateral regulation and his control over the use of saccharin, when all he had to go by were some animal experiments with rats. It is disappointing that he would take that kind of information, resulting in discriminatory regulations which preclude us as thinking people from making up our own minds.

However, this situation is similar inasmuch as we have something which has been shown to be more harmful to human beings, particularly children, and we have a government which tells us to forget about it. The government indicated also that it was not going to discuss it. I hope I am exaggerating, and I hope I find today that the government side will recognize this as a very important subject. It should be discussed by the representatives of the people of Canada via a committee of the House of Commons.

The hon. member for St. John's East brought to our attention some very interesting documentation from the American Medical Association which deserves accentuation, to the point where the deliberating body of the American Medical Association is prepared to confirm the risk they see in the violence that has been portrayed on television. Surely we have an obligation, on behalf of the people of Canada, to recognize the decision this body has made. At least we should open up for discussion this subject among ourselves as representatives of the people. I am appalled by government officials who have issued directions to the parliamentary secretary indicating that this is not to be. Hopefully they will reverse their stand shortly and allow this subject matter to come to discussion in committee.

In conclusion, I congratulate the hon. member for St. John's East for bringing this to the attention of the House and the people of Canada. He indicated a concern which he has always expressed in this House for the consumer. It does not matter how that consumer is looked at, whether he is a consumer of food, a consumer of housing, or a consumer of television programming. The government should show equal concern for the consumer and permit the amendment proposed by my House leader to pass, in order for this subject matter to go to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. F. A. Philbrook (Halton):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to offer my congratulations to the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) on his fine contribution. He dealt with matters which are bound to concern all of us, not just as parliamentarians, but as citizens.

[Mr. Halliday.]

I am tired of people speaking of freedom when they should really speak of licence. Exploitation of any kind may not be easy to define, but we must attempt it.

The hon. members who preceded me have examined in some detail the results of scientific research into the effects of televised violence. They did an admirable job in showing how gratuitous and unnecessary depiction of violence can strike at the very core of our social institutions. Those are the ties of affection which naturally bind us to our families, the most important foundation of society, and our fellowman.

● (1640)

I should like to go on and make a few remarks which are rather important to me in relation to this subject. At this point I should like to assure the hon. member for St. John's East that whatever the intention of the House, it would not be my intention to talk out this bill or to defeat this amendment, and I should like to make that very clear right now.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Philbrook:** But if the House will bear with me, I should like to make a few remarks which I think are important and bear on this subject. I should like to direct the attention of the House to a very different level of analysis, and examine televised violence, not just as a problem which threatens the individual psyche and social well-being, but also as symptomatic of problems which face the entire broadcasting industry in Canada. These may seem like strong words, but I think that if you will bear with me you will find that they are not altogether inappropriate.

In recent weeks we have heard equally strong words about the relationship of television violence and the state of our broadcasting system from many quarters, particularly from the LaMarsh Commission on violence in the media which recently reported to the government of Ontario, even though the provinces have no jurisdiction over television. It is an unusual situation but still important.

It seems to me that all the critics, however different their conclusions and recommendations, agree on one point: that the problem of violence on television is primarily a problem of the domination of the Canadian airwaves, and more especially of Canadian cable systems, by American programming. American programming is violent and Canadian programming is not—it is as simple as that. One of my colleagues has already cited the statistic that 97 per cent of the violence appearing on Canadian television is of American origin, and less than 3 per cent is natively Canadian. What more striking proof could we want?

But, although much has been heard lately, I should like to remind the House that there is nothing particularly new to be found in the recent spate of criticism of the broadcasting system. Approximately one and a half years ago, in a speech which she delivered in Ottawa, the Minister of Communications (Mrs. Sauvé) stated that:

If there is a singular problem today, it is the domination of our airwaves and our cable system by American programs.