

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

And that is why, of course, we, of the Conservative party, want to have more information in order to give justice not only to C.B.C. employees but also to the minister. The minister is now in a false position and we want to settle the case. In a parliamentary committee, we could hear persons able to give explanations on the management of the C.B.C.; it is as simple as that and I wonder how it happens that a certain member from Quebec objects to the Canadian people knowing the whole truth and nothing but the truth. That is all we want to know.

Mr. Speaker, we are studying a bill of the utmost importance. It is meant to legislate on a means of communication which belongs to all Canadians.

I do not have only blame for the minister; I have the right also to congratulate her for some provisions of the bill, and I say that, in that respect, she took into account the recommendations of the parliamentary committee on broadcasting, films and assistance to the arts to the effect that the broadcasting system should be strictly Canadian, that it should belong to all Canadians, that it should broadcast in both French and English, and that it should also contribute to the strengthening of national unity. It should be a bilingual system. I hope that all hon. members, even those who are not of French origin, will admit that the radio and television system must belong to all Canadians and that steps must be taken so that it will work to the benefit of the two great cultural majority groups in Canada: the French Canadians and the English Canadians.

On the other hand, if there are cultural minorities of French origin in Manitoba, in Saskatchewan, in British Columbia and other English provinces, those minorities must be given the advantage of C.B.C. services. It is the duty of the C.B.C. to give those French-speaking minorities all the means required to obtain the services of that broadcasting system. In that, I fully agree with the Secretary of State.

I also agree that the system must belong to all Canadians. I was told, upon inquiring from the C.B.C., that colour television was introduced in order to compete with certain American programs which were being picked up on Canadian soil. I say that the minister should, in agreement with the officials of the new Canadian radio commission, take all the necessary steps to ensure that the broadcasting system, which belongs to all Canadians, should be controlled by Canadians. In doing so, I think that the minister answered

[Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix).]

the plea of the committee on broadcasting, films and assistance to the arts when she included those principles in the bill now before us.

There is also the question, Mr. Speaker, of political interference in the C.B.C. or the new committee which will be established. We have learned, and I think that it should apply to all political parties, that the committee should be free from all political interference. It does not mean that parliamentarians should not take their responsibilities when examining the C.B.C. expenditures. But I see in that bill certain provisions which would not protect that crown corporation or that radio commission from political interference.

As an example, the government itself appoints the presidents of the two big corporations. I say that those corporations are so important and exert such influence in our society, that those appointments should be made by the Canadian parliament, in the same way as the appointment of the Auditor General of Canada.

I say that the governor in council, the Prime Minister and his ministers, by reserving for themselves the right of appointing the presidents of those two corporations are placing themselves in a dangerous situation. And even if there could not be any question about it, they could always be accused of having appointed at the top of those two organizations people who could serve the government in power, whether it be Conservative, Liberal or socialist. I hope it will never be a socialist government. Conservative or Liberal, I agree. This is the reason why I say that the minister should, in my opinion, submit the appointments of both chairmen of those bodies to the approval of the House of Commons.

Another field where political interference may easily be exerted is that of appeal procedures as a result of some C.B.C. decisions which will draw the radio commission in endless political quarrels. In that field again, the minister should be extremely cautious and require the radio commission to submit those appeals to the Supreme Court, or to the Exchequer Court, order to avoid such political interference.

Mr. Speaker, when the committee of which I was fortunately a member, considered the matter of broadcasting in our country, we based ourselves on four basic principles, which are found in the Fowler report of 1965 on broadcasting.

For the information of people who have not read that report, here are the four basic principles which the committee as well as the