

through broadcasting. Without any criticism intended or implied of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation or its management, I feel we should be very careful about confiding these important powers and possibilities solely to the judgment of a few men. You may say that there is nothing to fear, that all they will do is to try to stimulate and advance developments which are now going on. But I repeat that the people who control the communication of ideas through broadcasting have not only a tremendous responsibility but an enormous power. I do not agree with all the programs that come over the C.B.C.; nevertheless I would be very reluctant to suppress them. If some of them are plainly objectionable that evidences nothing more, I think, than that, notwithstanding a desire on the part of the governors and management to operate in a fair and judicial way, they make mistakes.

I would offer this suggestion. I have listened to various radio broadcasts, particularly on the Sunday evening program to which my honourable friend from Kennebec (Hon. Mr. Vaillancourt) referred, and I am bound to say, particularly with respect to two or three commentators who appear to be pretty regularly employed, that personally I would have written them off and written off the opportunity they have had to transmit over the air-waves what appears to me to be a peculiar type of propaganda. Far be it for me to say that no such propaganda should be allowed. But I am not impressed with the argument that somebody else can present the other point of view. At a public meeting varying opinions can be put forward; the columns of the press give space to all sorts of viewpoints; but once a broadcast is sent into tens of thousands of homes you can never catch up with or correct some of the impressions which may be created by it. That fact should ever be in the minds of those who have control of this medium.

Hon. Mr. Haig: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: Sometimes I wonder what will be the end-effect of it all. One goes into homes where the radio is on every hour of the day, presenting a medley of ideas and music and almost everything else. How in the world can a listener ever develop a clear or coherent appraisal of the matters he hears about, or form a considered judgment? Some may say this is not a danger; but to me it is rather a terrifying possibility, especially as it was precisely through these methods that the dictators to whom I have referred obtained control over the mass thinking of their peoples. Unless in a democratic society there

are enough citizens who take an interest in public business and are critical and inquiring in respect of the way in which they are governed, there is always a possibility that some great wave of mass hysteria may be aroused; and then we may be in a very difficult way indeed.

The proposal before us is to furnish the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, out of the treasury of Canada, with practically \$30,000,000 over the next five years. This money, of course, will come from the pockets of the taxpayers. I assume that, as a licence fee today is charged for the privilege of having a radio, when television is established licence fees will be charged to those who have television sets. It is clear that the revenues of the corporation will be very substantially increased by the appropriation contained in the bill before us.

There are two other points I wish to mention. I agree wholly with one of the criticisms made by the leader of the opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) and one or two others who have addressed themselves to the same matter: I have long felt that it is an anomaly that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which itself is actively in the broadcasting field, should supervise and direct private broadcasting stations; and I am wholly in favour of the idea that there should be a board whose responsibility will be not administrative, in the sense of arranging broadcasting programs, but wholly supervisory, much like the present Board of Grain Commissioners, which supervises laws relating to the grain trade.

While I hope that nothing I say will be construed as a criticism of the board, I believe that in these matters we have to look below the surface. There is no question that power, whether exercised by a board of governors of a broadcasting corporation, by a government, or by business, is an extremely dangerous thing. Less than a century ago a great political philosopher who was also a noted historian expressed this principle in the saying, "All power corrupts; and absolute power corrupts absolutely." If there is one lesson that stands out in the pages of recorded history it is the truth of that declaration. In my approach to these questions I try to test them by some of the well-founded principles that come to us as a result of the long and painful experiences of civilization in its onward march.

There is another point which I wish to discuss, and this is where I disagree with my honourable friend the leader opposite (Hon. Mr. Haig). I am opposed to the abolition of the licence fee. The radio service which our