

Broadcasting Act

a little further and defined what he felt a competitor to be, in that he used the words in the section, and I quote:

—for reason only that the person so applying carries on a business that competes with a business in which the licensee has an interest;

In other words it is not to apply against a competitor in the business of broadcasting, but a competitor in some other business which is not defined in the bill.

I realize that the hon. member has taken an injustice, as he sees it, and has built around it a bill which he is presenting to parliament. However I believe that the bill has been narrowed down to such a point that it is not in effect a general matter of legislation but is merely to cover a certain, specific situation, and that it would not properly apply to a lot of other situations that might arise. So I say it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to say what some other person might have as a business which would compete. For that reason I think the bill is deficient.

The next matter relates to the question that certain broadcasting stations, particularly radio stations, do not keep scripts of many of the news items and other programs which are broadcast over them. This is a short-coming that has turned up on many occasions. If certain things are said, or are alleged to have been said in a broadcast, particularly matters relating to news, on a good many occasions you cannot get the script to determine exactly what was said. Therefore it becomes very difficult to find what reason may have been assigned for refusal to do any broadcast or carry any advertising.

Also I think it would be ineffective because of the difficulty in proving that a refusal to accept advertising arises only for the reason that the competitor has an interest in the business. We have seen a good many instances where it would be practically impossible to say or prove that the only reason a station refused to accept advertising was that the other competitor had an interest in a competing business.

In the first place, if the bill were enacted you would not have the situation which the hon. member has put forward, where a broadcasting station has admitted, or in effect has admitted, that this is the reason it refused to accept the advertising. It would be very difficult, almost impossible, to secure such an admission by a person who is about to have his licence suspended for that very reason. You could not reasonably expect an admission and if you do not have an admission you must have proof that such a refusal was for the sole reason which was given in the bill. Could such a situation be proven?

[Mr. Aiken.]

I would foresee that any person who did not wish to accept advertising from someone could think of a dozen good reasons why he should not do it. He might put forward the excuse that the time which was requested was not available. He might make charges for that type of advertising which would be unreasonable and which would prevent the prospective advertiser from placing his advertising.

I would suggest that a person who wanted to contravene the very narrow provisions of this bill would have no difficulty in doing so.

There has been some reference made in the bill to the Canadian Bill of Rights. Certainly the bill of rights, as enacted, has done a great deal to remove discrimination in matters of this nature. I see it is six o'clock.

Mr. Herridge: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Aiken: Yes.

Mr. Herridge: I hope the hon. member understands clearly that I was not complaining about a reduction of my radio time or newspaper space, but does the hon. member realize there is some political advantage in being recognized as the people's David against the Goliath of monopoly?

Mr. Aiken: I would be very pleased to give the hon. member an answer when we resume this debate.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Chevrier: May I inquire whether the house leader has had any opportunity of considering the suggestion I made at five o'clock?

Mr. Churchill: That will be considered over the week end. On Monday we propose going ahead with legislation. I shall name five items for consideration so that hon. members may be ready. The order in which I call them may be altered on Monday morning and, if so, I shall advise parties on the opposite side. The items are: the second reading of the Bill C-38, dealing with financial and statistical information, the resolution in the name of the Secretary of State dealing with the universal copyright convention, the resolution in my name dealing with the Veterans Land Act, the resolution in the name of the Minister of Finance dealing with the Currency, Mint and Exchange Fund Act, and the resolution in the name of the Minister of Finance dealing with crown corporations.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker, I think I should bring it to the house leader's attention—and I am glad the Minister of Finance is here—