

Canadian Broadcasting Policy

of the government and opposition parties which were elected.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Allmand: I have referred to the French network but the same criticism can also be made of the English network. Often the opinions presented on the English network are negative, anarchist and sensational, with little opportunity given for replies from those holding opposing opinions.

When these problems have been raised in the house the minister has replied that it is not in order for the government to interfere. Well, Mr. Chairman, while I agree that it is dangerous to allow the C.B.C. to become the government's propaganda machine, to become the propaganda machine of the party in power, nevertheless something must be done to prevent others at a lower level from making the corporation their propaganda machine.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Allmand: There is no doubt that the C.B.C. is being made the propaganda machine of those destructive elements which are doing their utmost to destroy this country. As I say, this is a public network which is being supported by the money of people from all across Canada. Yet too often those people to whom I have referred are using the Canadian taxpayers' money to destroy the country and other, contrary opinions are not being presented.

Someone, whether it is the government or the C.B.C. administration, must see to it that the corporation fulfils the purposes for which it was founded. Those purposes must not be twisted or frustrated. This does not mean that only the opinions of the government or the party in power are to be put forward. All opinions ought to be put forward. Only in that way can the C.B.C. achieve its purposes of bringing about national unity and an exchange of opinion, as well as presenting Canadian contributions. This must be done, as the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo, who is able to express himself so much more clearly than I can, said. It must also be done in a way that will maintain artistic freedom. This is always a problem in a democratic society, but it is important to maintain order and direction while at the same time permitting freedom.

It has been mentioned that one of the main purposes of the legislation is to determine the manner of allocating airwaves between private and public stations. This, I believe, is

extremely important because it is necessary in a democratic system to have competing media presenting many different opinions to the public. This is important, as I say, and I hope there will be something in the legislation with respect to this matter. I also hope that the legislation provides for a bold expansion of the French and English networks. It is imperative for French language television to be expanded in those parts of Canada where there are sufficient numbers of French speaking Canadians. The same holds true for the English networks.

In conclusion I wish to repeat what I said at the beginning. While most Canadians support the principle of public broadcasting, they have not been happy in recent years with much that has been presented. They have not been happy with the administration of the principle. Let us hope that the legislation to be introduced this afternoon or this evening will go a long way to correcting these grievances.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Laflamme: Mr. Chairman, at the resolution stage, I simply want to say a few words in order to let the house know the general opinion of the people of my riding and to express perhaps some personal views on the urgency of that resolution and the ensuing bill designed to rectify the situation which prevails at the present time, at least in my area, where most people are dissatisfied with the way our news media and, in particular, our national network carry out the task assigned to them.

Of course, we could take the time to give some names, but the list would be too long, and I do not think that it is the purpose, because what is done is done. I think that some serious problems should be considered before introducing this bill, and the main one, in my opinion, deals with the definition of what may be the public interest in the general sense. When one reads the report on broadcasting, one does not find any definition of public interest in the general sense, especially with regard to the national network.

Obviously, the C.B.C. is faced with a financial problem, and a problem of authority. The financial one can, up to a point, hamper the full development of programming, which must be a source of personal enrichment far more than mere entertainment. Admittedly, the C.B.C. has lost many listeners to private stations, because it has not fulfilled its duty. It is not a matter of competing on a percentage basis, but it must be recognized that,