

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

and for alleged separatist influences in Quebec, that from now on we desist from undermining management. If the general public thinks that we as parliamentarians and politicians have little confidence in C.B.C. management, it is unreasonable to expect management to deal adequately with contentious questions having to do with staff, programs such as Seven Days—I have used that example again—and the permissive attitude of Radio-Canada in allowing those with separatist viewpoints to express them. Our lack of confidence, if it becomes apparent, will not be hidden from the public or C.B.C. employees.

If it is evident that we lack confidence in the corporation, management will be undermined in dealing with those matters for which we hold it responsible. We must return to the position of many years ago. When there was disagreement in parliament about matters pertaining to the C.B.C., they were referred to the minister who reported for the corporation and he in turn took up the grievance with the C.B.C. That, so far as the public was concerned, was the end of the matter. Parliament showed it had confidence in the discretion of C.B.C. management that appropriate action would be taken with respect to the grievance and no further discussion was required.

If we are not prepared to follow such procedures we shall continue to undermine management. On the one hand we talk about the independence of producers and on the other we hold management responsible for the conduct of producers. We must return to our former attitude. Parliament must let all C.B.C. employees know that we have confidence in management, that we expect management to be responsible for productions, for programming, and for everything that comes over our television screens.

That brings us to the next logical step. If we are not happy with what is going on, parliament can indicate that it has no confidence in management. Management personnel may be fired and replaced. But it seems to me we cannot do this if we continue to display a schizophrenic attitude to public broadcasting.

• (3:10 p.m.)

I should like to deal for a few minutes with an article which has been referred to by my hon. friend the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister. He drew attention to an article by Mr. Gordon Pape which appeared in the *Gazette* on Thursday, November 2 and went to some length quoting

[Mr. Munro.]

various paragraphs from it indicating infiltration of the C.B.C. by separatists or by those who desire a far greater degree of independence for Quebec than exists at the present time. He indicated that this tendency must be stopped. I wish my hon. friend had had time to read the remaining parts of this article which indicate that management has been and is now taking what it feels to be appropriate action in this regard. To quote from the article:

It appears, however, there is now action on two fronts aimed at improving the situation that M.P.s are complaining about.

First, there is the inquiry which has been ordered by the top brass at Radio-Canada into the charges that some of their employees were delegates to the R.I.N. convention. C.B.C. employees, like civil servants, are not prohibited from belonging to a political party, but the feeling among top management is that a certain amount of discretion is required.

"The value of an employee can decrease considerably if he takes a public position in favour of the N.D.P., the Liberals, the Conservatives, the separatists, or anyone else," is the way Mr. Ouimet puts it.

Presumably then, if the report finds that some employees did take such a public position at the R.I.N. convention, their value will be found to have decreased to the point where they are no longer assets to the corporation.

The second line of attack has been increased "consultation" in the past six weeks between Ouimet and the Radio-Canada production centre in Montreal—consultations clearly aimed at assuring better balance in programming, although no one wants to say so explicitly.

I go on now, to quote another part of this article which I believe to be worthy of note.

But overriding all other considerations, and standing as the main obstacle to the kind of action the Quebec M.P.s want, is the fear that any strong action on the part of Radio-Canada management will create martyrs out of the separatists.

The image of the oppressor is one neither the C.B.C. hierarchy nor the cabinet wants to assume. No one here has forgotten how skillfully Dr. Marcel Chaput used his firing from the civil service several years ago to win sympathy for the separatist cause in Quebec.

We all appreciate the problems which the C.B.C. management must be experiencing in this area. I, for one, am convinced that the separatist point of view has in fact received a disproportionate amount of coverage over Radio-Canada, and I agree with hon. members who point this out.

At the same time, before we become too critical we should recognize that any wholesale removal of these people would likely make martyrs of them and would certainly not improve the cause of unity in Canada. There is, of course, a further consideration.