

broadcasting system. The possibility of a joint public-private sector endeavour began to gain support. The Aird Commission also advocated annual government grants for public broadcasting, setting as a technical objective clear reception in all inhabited regions of the country, which at the time meant a 200-kilometre wide corridor along the Canada-U.S. border.

Such were the first parameters of a Canadian broadcasting policy designed to meet the major challenges peculiar to our geographic situation and political context: Canadian or American programming; public or private capital; respective responsibilities of public and private broadcasters; commercial requirements of private stations as opposed to their cultural obligations; regulation of contents or total lack of control; and protection of economic interests or diffusion of culture. All these alternatives were already becoming so many factors of the whole problem.

As early as 1929, this awareness of the importance of promoting and protecting culture was particularly strong in Quebec. For instance, the Quebec Government, the only Government in Canada with a French majority passed broadcasting legislation, invoking provincial jurisdiction over education and culture. However, in 1931, the Supreme Court, considering the interprovincial and international nature of the spectrum, ruled that the Government of Canada had sole jurisdiction over broadcasting.

Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, it was not until 1985 that a joint Quebec-Canada Committee took into account the distinct identity of French-language radio and television in this country and set out to harmonize policy in this area.

In 1932, further to the conclusions of the Aird Commission, the Conservative Government under R.B. Bennett passed the Canadian Broadcasting Act which created a national broadcasting system and introduced regulations for the private sector.

The Canadian broadcasting system was born. Basically, it was to remain unchanged, with a public and a private system, both subject to government regulations. Subse-

quent broadcasting legislation was merely a refinement of the original concept.

In the following years, a number of essential principles were formulated as we developed our approach to broadcasting in this country: radio waves are public property and government-authorized users have responsibilities as well.

Financing must come both from public and private sources; programming must be high quality and have Canadian content; and ownership must be Canadian.

The same principles which applied to radio would also guide the government in the 1950s, when television entered our homes. More than 30 years after the advent of radio, history repeated itself: American television programs immediately found their way to Canadian viewers.

This was the situation in the fall of 1952, when the CBC started broadcasting from its television studios in Montreal and Toronto.

Both stations were broadcasting eighteen hours a week: Toronto in English and Montreal in French and English. Remember, this was 1952! This imbalance would be unthinkable today.

American studios, which had already amortized their production costs on their own markets, offered their programs to Canadian broadcasters at greatly reduced prices. Since our own productions had to be entirely financed by our own market, they could hardly compete.

This hard economic truth and its dire consequences led to widespread dissatisfaction. That is why in 1955, the government appointed a second Royal Commission of Inquiry on Broadcasting, the Fowler Commission, which this time recommended appointing a Board of Broadcast Governors.

In 1958, under a Conservative Government, legislation was passed defining the mandate of the Board of Broadcast Governors. The Board granted licences to private television stations with affiliated status with the CBC. The dual system already in existence in the radio sector was also applied to television.

The same Board imposed Canadian content requirements on owners of private stations. This measure was not always successful, since private broadcasters were