

Broadcasting Act

to committee, which would allow the committee an opportunity to call the CRTC to ask the CRTC to report to it on just exactly what progress has been made with respect to the implementation of the recommendations of the committee which were concurred in by the House.

I will not go into the arguments in support of the bill. I refer hon. members to *Hansard* for November 26, 1971, page 9941. I have already made reference to the report of the committee; the bill is the same bill, and the arguments we could put forward can be found there. Since I believe there is a disposition on the part of the government to allow the subject matter of the bill to go to committee, I will not take up any more time of the House other than to say that I believe this is a very important matter. Children are influenced by television more than any other group in our society. Children are much more vulnerable than any other group in our society and, hence, they need the protection of society.

Advertising for children usually is perceived as a directive or an order, and often a child—especially a child as defined by the bill, one who is under ten years of age—cannot differentiate between a commercial message and the program the child is watching. This creates a great deal of confusion. It creates stress on the child-parent relationship, especially in these difficult economic times.

As I say, I could go on and on, but I will conclude by just noting that since the bill was introduced, Quebec has introduced its own legislation which prohibits this form of advertising within the province of Quebec. I believe that has created jurisdictional problems which have been the subject of court references from time to time. I think that as well could be something we could look into when this matter is referred to the committee.

In any event, I thank the government in anticipation of the amendment which I expect will come forward to allow the subject matter of this bill once again to be referred to committee.

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that I and my party agree with the bill, as we did in 1973. I heartily recommend that it go to the appropriate committee, and hopefully this time something will come of its recommendations, certainly as they apply to certain private broadcasters here but, also as they apply to programs which spill over into our country from the great nation to the south of us.

I recall the hearings vividly. While I did not take full part in all of them, I can well remember the effort and the concern expressed by some companies producing breakfast foods. They manufactured their "crunchies" out of some sort of sawdust and loaded them with sugar and then defended the nutritional value of their products before our committee, even to the point of bringing in experts and nutritionists from south of the border to defend the position they took.

This bill will not be embraced with jubilation by all advertisers, so I think it takes a great deal of courage on the part of the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) to bring this bill forward again and also for Parliament and our broadcasting authority, the CRTC, to do something about it.

I do not think the fight will be an easy one. The idea of a voluntary code will be the idea most appealing to many advertisers. The point is that a voluntary code has not worked; otherwise, we would not need to have this bill.

As I said before, we agree with the intent of the bill, and probably would support stronger legislation than is actually in this bill. However, I understand that it is only the subject matter of the bill that will be referred to the committee. If it is referred to the committee—and I understand it is to be—perhaps in its wisdom the committee might take stronger steps than are outlined here.

Since the inception of CBC television the CBC has had an advertising ban on child-directed educational programs. Five years ago the CBC increased its restriction on child-directed advertising, and a total ban on advertising during programs directed at children under 13 has been in effect for some time. This has not been the case on a number of private broadcasting stations. A total ban on advertising adjacent to—meaning before and after—programs directed to children under the age of 13 is also part of the CBC code. There are also restrictions on the number of child-directed commercials during prime time or family viewing times. That is also part of the code, and I support that, as does my colleague, the hon. member for Beaches (Mr. Young), who moved a motion under Standing Order 43 the other day proposing to ban television commercials during prime time if they are commercials advertising horror films which show the most violent and sensational clips from those films while children are watching which, presumably, they are since it is a time for family viewing and the programming is supposed to be suitable for family viewing.

• (1620)

I think there are a lot of areas that could be examined and investigated. Certainly, violence of any kind is something we should guard against. In our society there is far too much violence, and allowing it, or in effect almost recommending it to children as a form of entertainment or masochism, is something we do not need.

We can ask why child-directed commercials are allowed during adult programming. Perhaps it is because parents can discuss the programs with the child and rationalize the bid being made by the advertiser.

What the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) has been proposing since 1973 is that the kind of policy which the CBC has adopted be made widespread throughout the broadcasting media. He has noted, and I agree with him, that the province of Quebec is tougher about advertising than the rest of the country. Three years ago the province of Quebec adopted legislation banning advertising on children's programs. Naturally such a ban leads to a loss of revenue and advertisers could charge discrimination. There is no denying that in some ways that would be the case, but other things have been banned for a number of years. I think of liquor and beer commercials which are prohibited on certain television