

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

frequent involvement with broadcasting matters. If the Canadian radio commission does its job properly it should be possible then to concentrate the attention of parliament as regards programming matters on failure to comply with the broadcasting policy which parliament itself has laid down.

The next principle on which I believe there is general agreement is that all Canadians are entitled to broadcasting service in English and in French and, in particular, to the national network service of the C.B.C. The principal limiting factor here, of course, is cost, for the smaller and more remote the community the higher the per capita cost of providing service. We are still a very long way from achieving complete coverage, although we are steadily moving ahead each year to cover more of the outlying areas. At present the C.B.C. still works on the formula under which an English speaking or French speaking community or group of 2,000 is entitled to television service and of 500 to radio service. The priorities are allocated in accordance with the lowest per capita cost of providing service. Moreover, in saying that the national network services should be available from coast to coast, it should not be supposed that this can be done within any reasonably foreseeable period of time except through the use of affiliate stations. In other words, it is not the intention of this legislation to indicate that the C.B.C. should start out today and set up nationally operated stations in all parts of Canada. Thus the declaration of individual rights to service through this legislation is necessarily qualified by reference to the availability of funds. It will be for parliament to determine the priorities to be accorded to these expenditures in relation to other urgent national needs.

As I have already said, the statutory declaration of policy includes a definition of the national broadcasting service to be provided by the C.B.C. No definition was attempted in the 1958 act, so it was left to the corporation itself to lay down the requirements for the national service, to lay out the rules for itself. This caused a certain ambiguity to be created since the authority of the B.B.G. over the corporation has been vitiated by this division of responsibility. Under the legislation now before the house, both the commission and the C.B.C. will be governed by a common definition for the purposes of the national broadcasting service as established in this legislation by parliament.

Provision is also made to give effect to the recommendation of the standing committee

that there should be clearer recognition that the C.B.C. is the principal agency for carrying out public policy through broadcasting. The commission will accordingly be required to give priority to the needs of the national broadcasting service if and when these conflict with the interests of the private broadcasters. I would ask hon. members particularly to look at the wording of that section where the two words "objects" and "interests" are opposed. Any attempt to be precise in this matter would almost certainly be more limiting than a statement of general intention. There is no denying that the commission may from time to time be faced with very difficult problems to be resolved. However, in this connection I agree completely with the statement of the standing committee that the responsibility of the regulatory authority in the first instance should be to amplify the broad principles for Canadian broadcasting laid down by parliament.

There are two other aspects of national broadcasting policy to which I should like to refer very briefly. The first is that the broadcasting facilities which will be provided for educational purposes will be the subject, as I mentioned at the resolution stage, of a separate measure. It will be part of the broadcasting system as a whole and therefore will be subject to regulation and supervision by the Canadian radio commission.

The second point is that the commission should adapt its regulation and supervision of broadcasting to scientific and technical advances, the effects of which cannot be foreseen in detail at this time. In particular, it should be noted that the ground transmitting and receiving stations in connection with satellite operations will be subject to licensing, while an amendment to the Radio Act incorporated in this bill will extend the authority of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) to radio apparatus on space craft under Canadian control. Another amendment to the Radio Act, which is relevant to both these points, provides for regulation of the technical requirements for radio apparatus offered for sale in Canada, as for instance a requirement that all television sets offered for sale should be capable of receiving u.h.f. as well as v.h.f. channels.

● (3:50 p.m.)

I should like to deal now with the constitution and powers of the Canadian radio commission, the regulatory authority which is to replace the Board of Broadcast Governors. However, before I say anything else I might