

Already several of our publishing houses have sold out to outside interests, and I am informed that sitting somewhere on the minister's desk or on the desk of one of these hirelings there is a very reasonable proposal by the publishing industry in Canada that there should be—and this involves my friend, the Postmaster General—a rebate to Canadian periodicals on some of the rates they have to pay. Publishers will have to pay more under the new postal act, but perhaps there might be some help given to the publishing industry through advertising revenue if a credit were given when an advertiser advertises in a Canadian periodical. Someone has even suggested that an outright grant be made to periodicals in Canada which use paper made in Canada. Of course, a beginning could be made by utilizing the office of Information Canada. Instead of placing all advertising contracts with private public relations firms in Toronto, some of this government advertising could be restricted to Canadian periodicals.

Who knows, if we wait long enough, there may be an over-all cultural policy integrating the various agencies of the federal government from CBC on the one hand to the Film Development Corporation and the National Film Board on the other. In this way, the taxpayer who has to pay the shot would get something for his money, and we could develop a Canadian flair and flavour instead of merely pouring out our dollars for the support of the artist.

While the sheer size of the Secretary of State's office is staggering there is, I am afraid, another flaw in a coherent communications policy, and that is, I suggest, in the personality of the minister himself. When I say "personality" I use the word in a generic way, not intending any personal reflection but rather meaning the passion which the man has to do certain things. I think it is clear to all objective viewers, and in fact a credit to the minister himself if he were not in such a sensitive portfolio requiring balance and perspective, that culture, and more precisely the development of the French fact in the federal system, are the motivating reasons the minister entered federal politics. As I have said, this is a laudable objective in ordinary circumstances so long as it is pursued positively, openly and constructively for a better and a united Canada. But you will not have a better and a united Canada if all policies are predicated primarily on a cultural base when other considerations should be assessed and applied in some cases.

While communications and culture are interrelated, is part of the confusion and uncertainty in Canada today the result of a growing feeling that any policy on communications is subservient to cultural criteria? Should not the two supplement one another so that a decision made in communications is made on its merits, and then, when deemed to be in the national interest, dovetailed to fit a cultural policy? Are decisions in communications to be made on the basis of cultural factors, so that the result is blurred and the taxpayer never really knows the pros and cons of a full communications assessment? We only have to look at the CRTC hearings in Ottawa which began on Monday, June 28, to illustrate the point.

The Budget—Mr. Nowlan

Yesterday National Cablevision Limited applied for a cablevision licence for certain cablevision interests in Canada, more particularly in the province of Quebec. National Cablevision Limited has as a major shareholder, among others, the Quebec Deposit and Investment Fund. This fund holds 30 per cent of the shares, which is the maximum it can invest in any company pursuant to section 29 of its act of incorporation. This company is also an agent of the Crown, as set out in section 4 of Chapter 23 of the act which reads as follows:

The Fund shall be an agent of the Crown in the right of the Province.

On June 4, 1970, long before this application came before the CRTC, the government, presumably on the recommendation of the minister responsible, the Secretary of State, issued a directive to the CRTC pursuant to section 27 of the Broadcasting Act prohibiting the issuance of a broadcasting licence to "agents of Her Majesty in the right of any province". Section 3 of the directive defines agents as follows:

For the purposes of this direction, "agents of Her Majesty in right of any province" means any agents of Her Majesty in such right and includes a municipal or public body empowered to perform a function of government in a province or any corporation empowered to perform a function or duty on behalf of Her Majesty in such right.

Admittedly, this directive was made at the time to restrict and prohibit the issuance of a broadcasting licence to educational institutions, but the definition of an agent goes beyond this intent and, I submit, includes the Quebec Deposit and Investment Fund, one of the companies concerned in the application filed by National Cablevision Limited.

The chairman of the CRTC said before the Broadcasting Committee only last week that he has received a legal opinion which indicates that he can hear the application, but admits that a problem may arise if the applicant is successful. Is that the situation or will the commission wiggle out of the legal conundrum by suggesting with a straight face that, since the licensee is only partly an agent of the Crown in right of a province, the directive of June 4, 1970 is not contravened? If there is such a subtle distinction, is it only a coincidence that Mr. Cliche, the former CRTC commissioner, is behind the application and that Mr. Gilles Bergeron, formerly an assistant deputy minister in the Department of Communications, is now the deputy minister of communications in the province of Quebec?

• (4:00 p.m.)

My point is this. There may be good reasons for the province to get involved in the cablevision business, especially where the program begins and ends within provincial boundaries. In addition to Quebec, Ontario and Alberta have recently laid claim to jurisdiction in this field. I suggest, however, that the apparent backdoor attempt of the federal government to abdicate its only recently challenged jurisdiction in the cablevision field, without discussions with the provinces on the fundamental issues of who is paramount and what is concurrent jurisdiction, can only weaken the national fabric and