

Supply—Secretary of State

work of the house to your constituents. Perhaps I might draw to your attention the relevant parts of the C.B.C.'s manual of policies and regulations concerning political and controversial broadcasting.

"The C.B.C. is prepared, if requested by a member of parliament or of a provincial legislature, to broadcast talks by him to his constituents on corporation stations which serve an area not covered by any privately-owned radio stations, under the following conditions:

(a) The talks will be reports on the work of parliament or the legislature and will not be partisan or controversial.

The first part of that statement of policy prohibits talks from being partisan or controversial. I ask you, Mr. Chairman, how a politician can say anything concerning the business of this house that is not controversial?

Mr. Byrne: It can be done, and it is done by the C.A.B.

Mr. Nielsen: If most of these debates are not controversial, then I am mistaken as to the purpose of debate. Surely, the placing of both sides of an issue before anyone is, in itself, an indication that the matter is controversial. If I am going to place before my constituents over the C.B.C. any matters that arise in this house, surely I should be allowed to state the position that is taken by one side. It might not be the position taken by the other side, but that is the whole purpose of debate, and that is why we are here.

Mr. Byrne: Let us hear your script.

Mr. Nielsen: I will read my script in just a moment. I intend to do that to indicate the absurdity of the regulations that are laid down in this manual. I can read from *Hansard* as long as I wish, so I can put this speech on *Hansard* and then go back to the C.B.C. and read it over the air. This, I cannot do at the moment and, so far as the C.B.C. is concerned I am censored out of existence.

The second part of the rule—I have just read the first part—is as follows:

They will be given only when parliament or the provincial legislature is sitting.

I made this broadcast on December 17, in time for the tape to be sent for my broadcast over the Yukon network before this parliament adjourned. I must, in fairness, give the C.B.C. credit here. They tried to communicate with me sooner, and I tried to call back, but the official in charge had gone to Montreal and I could not communicate with him until the Monday. The net result has been that I have been prevented from reporting to my constituents by the lapse of time.

Now, paragraph (f) of the C.B.C. manual states this:

(f) The producer of the program, whether in Ottawa or at a local C.B.C. station, will be responsible for seeing that the broadcast conforms with

[Mr. Nielsen.]

these policies. If in his opinion it does not, he will refer the script to the office of the regional director or, in the case of northern stations, to the director of northern services in Ottawa before putting it on the air.

The hon. member for Skeena has the same problem that I do, because he reaches the northern part of his constituency by a low powered relay station that is hooked into the Yukon network. The upshot of this whole matter is simply that the producer of my talk has referred it to the supervisor of public affairs in Ottawa. He winds up his letter with this sentence:

I think this should be as soon as possible—

That is getting together for a discussion of this matter.

—since I am not anxious to hold up the broadcast any longer than we must.

In speaking to the C.B.C. official, I was informed that the broadcast was not going to be sent along to Whitehorse because, in his opinion, it was controversial and partisan. I sent along to the C.B.C. and obtained a photostatic copy of my script, and this is what I am going to read tonight. I know that many members are not going to agree with what I am going to say because it is a debatable matter. Nobody on this side agrees with the things that are said on that side, and the same situation exists between the political parties in this house. We all have different views on subjects, and therefore those subjects are controversial. How on earth can they be anything else? This is what I said in my remarks to my constituents:

Once again, I am reporting to you from Ottawa on the activities of the House of Commons and my work on behalf of Yukoners everywhere. Much has happened since you last heard from me and my activities on your behalf have indeed been varied.

I am sure that you have all heard a good deal lately, by way of radio broadcasts, and that which you have read in your newspapers, a good deal about the operation of the House of Commons. There are some who have said that there has been obstruction of the government's legislative program and there are others who have said that the house is operating inefficiently, due to the slow speed with which various legislative measures are passed through parliament. I do not believe this since I believe debate to be a very necessary instrument for the preservation of our democracy. Without full debate, and without free debate, we would quickly become a government by dictatorship.

I am not so sure we have not, but I did not say anything about that.

Anyone who is close to the activities of the House of Commons would agree with that, and I need not leave my opinion unsupported. I believe the best authority that I could quote as to the truth of my own beliefs in this regard would be Mr. Pickersgill. Mr. Pickersgill, of course, is a Liberal member of the government, and is the Secretary of State in the cabinet. He was very active in debates when he was in opposition,