

important aspect of broadcasting policy why does it apply only to the CBC? Why is it not in subclause (d) which applies to all broadcasters? Presumably private broadcasters have a duty to promote national unity as well as the CBC?

I am suggesting that subclause (d) is really all that is necessary in the way of instruction to all broadcasters in Canada on what they should do.

I still wonder about "national unity". I do not know if you can define it, or who could define it, or how it might be used in the future.

I know I have not asked a question of the Minister. I have stated the uneasiness, in the context of the French network today and of what I have heard in Parliament and in this Committee, that some people would seize this bit of legislation on national unity and seek to use it, even if you do not want to do so yourself; the pressure would be there.

• (10:50 a.m.)

Miss LaMarsh: Well, I certainly understand, Mr. Chairman, what Mr. Prittie has said. No public institution, I suppose, is perfect. I do not know what will happen in the future, or what kind of government might attempt a definition of "national unity" and try to enforce it. I do not know what senior officials, or not-so-senior officials, in the CBC might decide to do in interpreting it. I think it is clear in my mind and in the minds of everybody here, but it is not a very easy thing to spell out in legislative form.

Mr. Prittie: May I ask this then. If this responsibility is to rest with the national broadcasting service, which means the CBC, should it not also then be a responsibility of the private broadcasters as well? Why was this not put in?

Miss LaMarsh: I think the reason why it was put in was in the CBC context, in that this is the instrument which Parliament has chosen with respect to broadcasting. Parliament is now, in this Bill, saying to the instrument that this is one of its purposes, and as long as that purpose is there, to help weld the country together, Parliament is prepared to raise taxes from the people to keep it going. It would be an odd thing if most of us felt that our mandate as members of Parliament was to tax our fellow citizens and our-

selves in order to bring upon us the destruction of the country.

Mr. Prittie: Agreed, but if these are worthy aims and the Bill and the Committee have recommended that the public corporation be the prime instrument of this, should this not also be a policy direction to the private broadcasters as well if it is important?

Miss LaMarsh: Perhaps in some ways the private broadcasters are more responsive to the public in matters controversial.

An hon. Member: They would have to be.

Miss LaMarsh: They are certainly a little tamer about it anyway. If the public were as enraged about programs of private stations as reflected from some of the mail I have seen and from the debates I have listened to, I am sure that the private station would not be in business very long.

Mr. Prittie: I will close my remarks on this section dealing with policy. Again, if these words are important:

contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity; ...

they are important for all broadcasters, not just important for the public broadcaster. I wish you and your officials perhaps would think about that part.

Miss LaMarsh: We always think about everything you tell us, Mr. Prittie. I do not mean to say that lightly, either.

Mr. Mather: Mr. Chairman, I just have one question. We are meeting this morning to consider this legislation which has to do with a broadcasting policy for Canada. I for one, as a member of this Committee, feel that my ability to discuss that, and to consider it, is affected to some degree by the unfortunate controversy which is raging between the Minister and the CBC leadership. The Minister has stated—and rightly so in my view—that she is not responsible to the CBC leadership; that she is responsible to Parliament. I think this Committee is representative of Parliament. It is a parliamentary body. My question is: Would the Minister consider that this Committee is an appropriate body to which to give the information and counsel which she apparently could give in relation to improving the management of the CBC?