

*The Address—Mr. Fleming*

control and, above all, with the high-handed attitude of the government and of the C.B.C. with respect to the subject of television.

The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) revealed that he needs some further briefing on the facts when he undertook to give to the house, as it appears at page 82 of *Hansard*, apparently what was the substance of a communication addressed to him by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann). The Prime Minister said:

I have a note here that there was an attempt to set it up,—

That is, the House of Commons committee on radio broadcasting at the 1948 session—but that the minister in charge found there was no one who wanted it.

Mr. Speaker, if the government had made a full announcement last session of what it intended to do, or intended to permit the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to do in spending money the government put at its disposal, you may be sure there would have been a demand for the setting up of that committee. As a matter of fact the 1947 committee included in its report a recommendation that the committee should be made a standing committee of the house.

On this subject I would say this to the Prime Minister—and first of all on the subject of television—that he is not going to escape responsibility by the setting up of a royal commission. It may be a convenient device to try to sidetrack debate and discussion by saying, "Oh well, that particular subject is under review by a royal commission. We do not wish to prejudice their review of the question, and we are asking the commission to deal with it." The government must not be permitted to dodge its responsibilities that way.

This subject of television has been discussed in committees and by the press, and the attitude of the government and the C.B.C. has been exposed before committees. It was exposed before the House of Commons committee in 1947. On that occasion the Minister of National Revenue undertook to inform the committee of the stand taken by the government on this question, and to justify it.

What he said in effect was, "We do not think it is a good thing for Canadians, while this field of television is in its infancy, to permit Canadians to go ahead and risk their money in the development of it. We and the C.B.C. are not going to do anything; we will sit by and see what happens in the United States."

That was the sum and substance of the attitude of the government as portrayed to the committee by the Minister of National Revenue. Mr. Speaker, I characterized it then, I characterized it last year and I

characterize it today as a dog-in-the-manger attitude, born out of the infernal paternalism which characterizes this government's attitude at all times.

What does it amount to? They will not let private stations do anything; they will not let Canadians who are quite prepared to risk their money in developing this field go ahead and do so. They will not permit them, because they say it is not a good thing that they be permitted to risk their money. They will not do it themselves. They have been marking time, and have not done anything.

The result is that Canada, which ought to be a leader in this scientific field, is far behind. We are away behind the United States; we are behind Great Britain, too, in the field of television. Apparently this government is content to sit back and watch the rest of the world go by. It is content to let the rest of the world get ahead of us while it sits with folded hands, and keeps its hands folded—and also keeps the hands folded of those who would develop the field, if the government gave them the opportunity.

The other striking point in the remarks of the Prime Minister in connection with radio broadcasting has to do with what he declared to be his open mind on the subject whether the C.B.C. should be permitted to continue to have power to regulate all radio broadcasting in Canada by private stations, or whether that function should be assigned to a public body separate and distinct from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which is an operating body.

Mr. Speaker, that is a strange profession from the Prime Minister, who has been a leading member of this administration for the last seven years. It has been the policy of this administration throughout that time to refuse to deprive the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation of any of its power to control all broadcasting in Canada carried on by other stations.

His colleague and deskmate (Mr. Howe) has taken the position in the house, time after time—and apparently the Prime Minister did not pay any attention to it; perhaps we should not have either—that this power should not be taken from the C.B.C. But today, if you please, the Prime Minister, as a reason for appointing a royal commission on the subject, and seeking to get the government out of its responsibility, says, "I have an open mind on the subject."

Well, he was a member of the administration for the last seven or eight years which has had a closed mind on the subject. If the Prime Minister's mind is open, then let us congratulate him and let us also hope that the opening of minds will also be communicated to other members of his administration.