

*Canadian Broadcasting Policy*

success, the ideal outlined by the Fowler committee report of 1965 which said:

One of the essential tasks of a broadcasting system is to stir up the minds and emotions of the people, and occasionally to make large numbers of them acutely uncomfortable.

Unless a public system is allowed that kind of freedom, we are in danger of creating broadcasting institutions which may descend to becoming nothing more than the mouth-piece of a minister, a government or a parliament.

It is undoubtedly true that one of the major questions, if not the major one, facing us here, and certainly facing many who are concerned about the future of broadcasting in this country, is the problem of programming. I think that here we have entered into a new era of which we have not been conscious. The minister referred to it briefly in her speech when she said that we have basically established the necessary facilities to serve the country adequately. This is not to say that there are not certain glaring omissions. C.B.C. service is certainly demanded in provinces such as New Brunswick and Saskatchewan where it is inadequate as it exists.

• (3:50 p.m.)

However, we must recognize the fact that having spent hundreds of millions of dollars to establish a broadcasting service which is technically second to none we have reached a point at which the technical facilities and their placement may now be secondary to the content that is carried by it. Unfortunately, because of our preoccupation with the technical side of these rapidly expanding media, regulations have been aimed much more at quantity than at quality, and I believe we must give very serious consideration to the quality of broadcasting. I think it is of extreme importance to many that the board of broadcast governors should be given the necessary powers to exert greater control and supervision over all aspects of broadcasting. We must also overcome a kind of inferiority complex in our concept of broadcasting.

For some years now we have talked about Canadian broadcasting in terms of minimum Canadian content. Surely we should put it the other way and talk about minimum foreign content and realize that our responsibility is not to think of only having so much Canadian quality programming but rather to ensure that apart from a certain minimum of excellent foreign programming all else will be assumed to be the best kind of quality programming that private and public broadcasters can present to the Canadian people.

It is difficult, as I said in the beginning, to speak in any detail on a bill which can be conceived of only on the basis of what one may have gathered from reading various reports. Surely we should be giving special attention to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Regardless of our many frustrations and at times disappointments with the C.B.C., it must be said again and again that we shall always be indebted to the technical achievements and gifts of the men who have laboured unceasingly to establish throughout this country a facility of which all Canadians can be proud. But we must not rest there and we must not think that our responsibilities conclude there.

One of the things which disturb me greatly is that in the redrafting of broadcasting policies we may conclude that by some slight adjustments in the appointment of the managing board we can overcome some of the deep-seated problems that presently exist within the C.B.C. This would be an enormous mistake and would perpetuate certain overriding problems which must be met. It is not just a question of new faces in the board room on Bronson avenue. It is a question of structural overhaul, a change of approach, an attitude which must reach all the way from Ottawa to the smallest grouping of C.B.C. staff wherever it may be operating.

I am most concerned that in our suggestions with regard to legislation setting out a new mandate for the C.B.C. we give adequate thought and discussion to the structural changes which are necessary to overcome the arthritic approach which has set in far too often in operations involving the C.B.C. Bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo should never have been allowed to exist in an industry which is at best creative and artistic and at worst some form of government administration or civil service agency which is more anxious to ensure the security of its employees than to carry out its responsibilities in providing a broadcasting service to the Canadian public. Perhaps this has been due to the fact that the C.B.C. has operated as an institution parallel to the government. It has in it far too much of the qualities of the civil service, not in its best but in its worst aspects. This must be set right in this industry if it is to do the job that we all hope it will. This structural overhaul must be considered in this place or else the new personnel charged with responsibilities will fail to know what are the overriding problems facing them.

I am also concerned that in the selection of these key people who will serve as members