

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

One can hardly argue with that as an aim of the broadcasting system, but it will have very many meanings; national unity means so many different things to so many different people. I expressed the other day one little fear at the back of my mind. I have heard a great many complaints about people in the C.B.C., particularly the French network, supposedly being leftists, separatists and so on. I do not know whether this is true, and I am not sure that the people who make the accusations know whether it is true. But I would not want this phrase "national unity" in the legislation to be used as any sort of excuse for witch hunting within the corporation.

While the object of the national broadcasting system in its public and private sectors should be to promote national unity I hope we will always allow for dissent in this regard; that is, allow for other ideas on what kind of country we should be. I see the hon. member for Lotbinière is in the house. The hon. member believes that Canada ought to be a republic. That is a view held by a number of people in the country. There should always be room for that view to be expressed on our broadcasting system. So let us watch this particular point about national unity which is now written into the new act.

• (11:50 a.m.)

We have this rather difficult problem, Mr. Speaker, of running a public broadcasting system which has not become a state system. There are many countries in Europe, and I am not referring to just eastern Europe, in which the broadcasting systems are obviously state systems dominated by the government. We do not want that here. This leads me back to another point I was discussing the other day, having to do with the kind of persons appointed to be in charge of our broadcasting system, those people who will be members of the Canadian radio commission or whatever name the regulatory authority will have and the people who will run the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Just before adjournment of the debate on Wednesday, I quoted an editorial from the *Ottawa Citizen* of October 19, I believe it was, which was to the effect that these appointments should be non-political. I quite agree with that. I feel very much about these appointments as I do about the appointment of judges. This does not mean that anybody who has been identified with the party in power is automatically ruled out. There has been some criticism of the present board of directors of the C.B.C. The broadcasting committee has an opportunity to meet

all these people last year or earlier this year. Some of these people, I think, might well be on the new board.

The point is that people of the highest quality who have stature in their own particular regions or nationally in this country should be considered regardless of their political background. If I may just take an example, I should think Mr. Robert Fowler would know a great deal about broadcasting now as a result of all the experience he has gained investigating it. I am told that Mr. Fowler is a Liberal. I believe Mr. Fowler would make an admirable appointee to one of these agencies, either the Canadian radio commission or the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. We have to try to avoid the suspicion which can be aroused in the public mind if all the appointments come from one particular point of view.

I am not going to labour at any length the statements made by the Secretary of State about the management of the C.B.C. I thought the title of the editorial in *La Presse* of November 2 was very apt; it read "Une Déclaration Bizarre". I am sure the minister has heard a great deal about it both from this side of the house and the other side. I should simply like to say that presumably the new act will be invoked very shortly and new appointments will be made. It would have been better leave these things unsaid. It would have been better to make the new appointments, have the new people get on with the job and make whatever changes may be necessary. As it is, reflections have been cast upon some innocent persons. Perhaps the minister did not intend that, but this is inevitably what has happened.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to address myself to one particular aspect of broadcasting which I think is a very important one which we have to face. I stress this important principle of broadcasting, and it is this question. Do Canadians want Canadian programs on Canadian television stations? This question has been asked quite recently by a number of people who comment on radio broadcasting in this country. On October 21 the *Toronto Daily Star* had an article written by Mr. Roy Shields entitled "Satellites and cable TV threaten networks". I should like to quote briefly from it:

Within five years CTV may be out of business and the C.B.C. reduced to the status of educational television in the United States.

This is the threat from new horizons opening to cable TV and the imminent arrival of domestic satellite broadcasting.

[Mr. Prittie.]