

Canadian Policy on Broadcasting

we have asked repeatedly of the Secretary of State, or of the cabinet, or even of the right hon. Prime Minister to give us information that could help us to judge whether these accusations are justified. The Liberal party, the government in office do not want to give this information. The party and the government will bear the consequences and carry the burden.

When we were in office, from 1958 to 1963, the C.B.C. employees went on strike, and I remember that we were forced to specify in this house our grievances against the management of the C.B.C. We did that and settled the strike, but it was not favourable to the government, because in 1963 all the C.B.C. information media were used to defeat the Conservative party. But, at that time, we assumed our responsibilities, and I suggest that the minister responsible for the C.B.C. should take her responsibilities before the members of parliament, before those who represent the interests of the people, in order that they can better appreciate the situation in the C.B.C.

I repeat this: If the minister knew for the last two years that such a situation existed within the C.B.C., I say that she is not sincere and that she has mislead parliament in keeping these facts secret when they should have been brought to the attention of parliament, so that directives could have been given to the ministers in order to reform the management of the C.B.C.

Returning to the question just asked by the hon. member, I do not object to the fact that a French Canadian has been accused. Mr. Ouimet is chairman of the C.B.C.; everyone knows that he offered to resign several months ago. The government refused the resignation but waited to introduce a new legislation in the house and accuse him of all the ills of Israel and say that if anything was wrong in the C.B.C. it was all Mr. Ouimet's fault, a French Canadian. I object to that; I object to that charge and to that gratuitous statement made by the minister.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative party, anxious to make all the facts known to the public—Does the hon. member want to ask a question?

Mr. Béchard: No.

Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix): That is why the Conservative party, anxious to make all the facts known to the public is asking again that this bill be referred to a parliamentary committee, so that we may study it and call

as witnesses all those accused by the minister, in order to determine whether the accusations are well-founded. That is the only reason.

Mr. Duquet: May I put a question to the hon. member? He has read the statement of the Secretary of State, regarding the information she says is in her possession. Now, she was reported in the press as having stated that the information had been in her possession for only a couple of weeks and, a few minutes ago, the hon. member was talking about two years.

• (8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix): It is very easy to reply to the question of the hon. member. If the Secretary of State has only had the information for the past two weeks, it is because she has been derelict in her duty. She is responsible for the C.B.C.; she must get information and data from all departments under her jurisdiction and she should not wait for the introduction of such an important bill as the one now before us to bring up unfounded charges against the administration of the C.B.C.

Mr. Régimbal: That is why we want the bill to go to the committee.

Mr. Duquet: You have not replied to my question.

Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix): Yes, I have replied to your question.

Mr. Duquet: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member knows that it has been only two weeks or if he believes the minister's statement, I say that he is not in good faith when he says that the minister has had the information for two years. At least, let him stick to the facts.

Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix): I never said that I had the information for two years but I said that the minister has been Secretary of State for two years, responsible and accountable for the C.B.C. to the house and I say that if she has had the information for only two weeks, it is because she was derelict in her duties and has not fulfilled her responsibilities when she says the day before such an important bill as this is introduced, that things are not going well at the C.B.C.

If she had been a responsible minister or person, she should have inquired of a corporation under her jurisdiction to know whether things were going well or going badly.