

*Broadcasting*

to make some general, objective observations. I want to discuss that general phrase "political interference".

All of us in the House of Commons, and the Canadian people, believe that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation—and I am not for one moment suggesting that I am going to cover all its powers which it derives from its original charter—has shown great leadership in the development of our country. It has played a very great role. Many loyal and great Canadians form its working force. I think in most instances we are all proud of it as a corporation. If we think it is desirable, and I believe most of us do, to have a distinctive Canadianism going from coast to coast in this country, perhaps we are also equally agreed that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has played a very important role in this respect. This was the original intention in the setting up of the corporation.

Whether we refer to television or radio broadcasting, I am sure we will all agree that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has done a good job in certain areas of this country which for the time being could not be served by private enterprise in a practical way. If it was not for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation many areas of this great country of ours would have no radio or television services at all.

Now, sir, I want very briefly to discuss the desirability of examining the corporation in committee. After all, it is one of the most pertinent parts of this resolution that we are discussing this morning. I think we should pay much more attention to this general subject because it involves a very great principle. Canada is a young country. Confederation dates from 1867. We have gone through two great world wars and many emergency periods. At the same time, by the natural evolution of things government has become bigger and bigger. Thus many crown corporations have come into existence, for good or for bad. Therefore I think it is most important that as members of parliament we make sure they receive careful scrutiny at all times; because while it is very necessary at times to create crown corporations, we must make sure exactly how, why and if they fit into the democratic scheme of things as we see it under a parliamentary system of government.

I think that very often people err when they try to compare the C.B.C. with the B.B.C. to too great an extent. The experience of the B.B.C. in the United Kingdom is much different from that of the C.B.C. in Canada. First of all, their experience is longer; and second, the B.B.C. is superimposed on a

unilateral state whereas the C.B.C. is working in conjunction with a parliamentary system and a federal state. These are general principles that I think should be outlined when we are trying to compare the two corporations.

Again I reiterate and emphasize the necessity, especially in peacetime, of members of parliament through our parliamentary institutions always exercising eternal vigilance in scrutinizing the activities of crown corporations. We all know that the C.B.C. reports to parliament through the Minister of National Revenue and at this point I should like to emphasize the fact that parliament is made up in large measure of people who are proud to call themselves politicians. Therefore we must be very careful in giving consideration to that very loose expression, "political interference". I would warn all members that when people confuse the idea of political interference with the voice of the people; when people confuse the idea of political interference with the true and rightful duties of a member of parliament; when irresponsible pronouncements are made regarding these two things, political interference on the one hand and the rightful duties of a member of parliament on the other hand, nothing is being done to serve the true principles of democracy as I am sure all broadminded members of the House of Commons understand them.

Therefore I am sure this committee is going to start its work in a sober and sensible way; I have heard someone suggest in a "serene" way. That is a very good word, but I think it was Haldane who said that justice must not only be just but must also seem to be just. So I think these are general principles that should be understood before the committee starts its work.

Just because a member of parliament wants to know how much a cultural program costs or is going to cost, be it on television or radio; just because he wants to know what the price tag of that cultural program is, let us not smear that parliamentarian and say that he is anti-culture. In the past I have done a little church work, and we had a minister who was a great sky pilot but did not occupy himself too much with the books of the church. He was a wonderful minister, but a few people had to get together to make sure that church affairs and the church in general were going to be kept solvent. So I think it is extremely important that just because members of parliament and representatives in legislatures ask what something is going to cost, we do not as a result label them as anti-cultural.