

APPENDIX L

MEMORANDUM

SUBMITTED BY THE CANADIAN CONGRESS OF LABOUR

The Canadian Congress of Labour, representing some 250,000 Canadian workers in a wide variety of industries, welcomes the opportunity to express its views to your Committee on the important subject which is now under consideration.

Those views can be stated very simply and very briefly. The Congress is heartily in favour of the basic policy embodied in the Aird Report, the Canadian Broadcasting Act, and the reports of successive Parliamentary Committees with regard to "public ownership of all high-powered stations under a national system of broadcasting." In certain respects, that policy can be more fully implemented than has been done in the past, but the Congress is wholly opposed to any change in the policy itself. The radio belongs and ought to belong to the people of Canada; it is far too important a means of information and education to be allowed to fall under the domination of private interests.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has, on the whole, been doing an excellent job, and deserves to be supported and strengthened, not undermined or weakened. Specifically, the Congress is opposed to the proposals made by spokesmen for the private broadcasting stations, which have been sufficiently answered in the evidence presented to you by Dr. Frigon, notably at pages 59-60, 276, and 280-281. The Congress is of the opinion that freedom of discussion is far greater and far more secure on the publicly-controlled radio than in the privately-controlled press.

Many of the programs of the C.B.C. have performed valuable services to the Canadian people and deserve the warmest praise. In some of the programs, notably the Farm Forum and Labour Forum, the C.B.C. has been a pioneer, and is to be strongly commended for its initiative and enterprise. The Congress hopes that such programs, and especially the Labour Forum, will be continued on an even more representative basis and with an even wider field of discussion than in the past. The Congress has been happy to co-operate in this work, and will be glad to continue its co-operation. Programs of this kind, properly conducted, and with due regard for various points of view, may make an important contribution to the democratic way of life.

With respect to the Corporation itself, the Congress wishes to make the following recommendations:

(1) The appointment of a permanent General Manager. It is no reflection on the abilities and services of Dr. Frigon to say that the present situation, in which the Corporation has for nearly a year been without a General Manager, is not satisfactory, and is indeed unfair not only to the public and the Corporation but to Dr. Frigon himself. A permanent appointment should be made without further delay. The Congress wishes, in this connection, to urge serious consideration of the suggestion that the new General Manager be appointed from within the ranks of the C.B.C. itself. In principle, and unless there is some strong overriding reason against it in a particular case, it is desirable that the system of promotion and seniority should apply to all positions in the Corporation, up to and including that of General Manager.

(2) If the policies and functions of the C.B.C. are clearly understood by every Canadian citizen, there will be no question as to the support it will receive from the public, and urgent and continued attention should therefore be given to publicity regarding these matters.