

*Broadcasting*

governments and the Canadian people have been prepared to support by way of public vote these important services. In our judgment it is essential that the corporation should be independent of political interference. To this end I would suggest that moneys for this service should be provided by statute over a period of five years so that the independence of the corporation will be all the better assured.

I believe that the C.B.C. as a national broadcasting system has the overwhelming support of the majority of Canadians. Many organizations across the country which take an interest in broadcasting have come to the defence and support of the corporation whenever they felt it was necessary. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is one of the great organizations that has taken much interest in the C.B.C. and has presented briefs to the government and the committee on broadcasting in support of this system of broadcasting and has made recommendations as to its improvement. I should like to quote a short paragraph found at page 12 of the submission of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to the committee on broadcasting under date of July 29, 1960. At page 12 of the brief we find these words which set out very well the purposes of a national broadcasting system and the issues involved:

The issue here is basic. Is the content and quality of our national broadcasting service to be guided by commercial interest and necessity, or is it to be guided by the goal of a varied broadcasting service of a high standard which will make its maximum contribution to Canadian life and Canadian culture, and which will be used commercially only to the extent possible without endangering this goal. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and it has been the opinion of many that the quality of television broadcast fare in Canada was and is not good enough, and that moreover this inadequacy could be attributed in considerable part to increasing pressure to meet commercial standards and requirements and to be commercially successful.

Any of us who has the opportunity to watch television has noted the increasing number of commercials that appear on our screens, I think to our own distraction. I feel they make little or no contribution to the cultural life of the Canadian people. I think advertising in this field is being overdone. I suggest the committee should inquire into the ethics of the whole advertising business. I feel there should be a thorough inquiry into the type of advertising used in the sale of drugs and a careful selection made of the kind of advertisements that should appear on our television screens and on the radio. I think the policy has gone overboard in demanding increased revenues from advertising at the expense of the listening public and the standards of programs.

[Mr. Argue.]

There have been some interesting comments made in the debate today. I have been in the house almost all the time. There have been fewer attacks on and less criticism of the corporation in this debate than on previous occasions. I welcome that indication of greater support.

Reference has been made to some of the programs that appear in Canada. The hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher) referred to the telecast of Mr. Kennedy's press conference and the great interest this type of program undoubtedly creates. I suggest that the United States in the field of press conferences and national political coverage have given us splendid examples of programs which examples should be adapted to use in Canada.

I have been asked on occasion whether the C.C.F. would support a national televised debate participated in by all political parties and I have answered strongly in the affirmative. I believe such televised debates would create much public interest, would be a good political education to Canadians and would lead to an increased interest in the democratic process.

However, in our country we seem to be going in the other direction. President Kennedy has had a press conference of a particular kind, a genuine press conference. We used to have a program on television called "Press Conference", and on this conference a person connected with the public life of this country would be questioned by a number of members of the press gallery. I am certain this program created a great deal of interest across the nation. The people interested in public affairs enjoyed the programs, and they learned a good deal not only of public policies but of the personalities in the nation who are directing those public policies. We all know the program "Press Conference" has gone by the board. I am not certain in my own mind of all the factors contributing to this decision, but I should like to know whether the Conservative members in this house had come to the conclusion that their cabinet ministers had better stay off "Press Conference" and that this was a very poor medium for them to use.

**Mr. Morris:** Nonsense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think the hon. member who has the floor has strayed a bit away from the subject that is before the house at the present time, namely the setting up of a committee. This may be a matter of general interest, but it relates rather to the conduct of political leaders.

**Mr. Argue:** Mr. Speaker, there have been references to a type of press conference that might be used on television. I think it is in