

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

I feel that there is a very serious lack in the bill that is before us, in fact a crucial one. On page 2, clause 2(d), we find that the commission is charged with providing a reasonable opportunity for the expression of conflicting views on matters of public controversy. This has been one of the touchiest points in the whole controversy over the C.B.C. I feel that this provision does not go far enough to protect us against the sort of things that have already happened. There are areas of public controversy where we cannot be reasonable because the threat to democracy and to the nation is too great. I should like to quote Sir Hugh Greene from "The Conscience of the Programme Director" where he stated the following:

—there are some respects—

He was speaking of the B.B.C.

—in which it is not neutral, unbiased or impartial. That is, where there are clashes for and against the basic moral values—truthfulness, justice, freedom, compassion, tolerance.

Nor do I believe that we should be impartial about certain things like racialism, or extreme forms of political belief. Being too good 'democrats' in these matters could open the way to the destruction of democracy itself. I believe a healthy democracy does not evade decisions about what it can never allow if it is to survive.

The actions and aspirations of those who proclaim some political and social ideas are so clearly damaging to society, to peace and good order, even in their immediate effects, that to put at their disposal the enormous power of broadcasting would be to conspire with them against society.

This is what I am concerned about in the bill and I hope that in discussing it in committee we can write in an amendment which would state that the power of this public institution is not to be turned over to those who would conspire against democracy, because in recent times we have come close to that great danger. We have heard from some speakers in this debate that surely Canadian democracy is such a sturdy growth that no such danger can arise and that it can withstand the shock of what is called "free discussion". However, I prefer the description of democracy given by Jacques Ellul in his book "Political Illusion", where he says:

● (4:20 p.m.)

It should have been clear that any political order based on values was an infinitely fragile thing, a rather astonishing human achievement, and one that had to be maintained by will-power, sacrifice, and constant renewal.

I believe that this statement applies, and it applies to legislation that we introduce in [Mr. Johnston.]

connection with broadcasting, public or private, in Canada, but particularly to the public sector because of the way in which the public have been asked to conspire against themselves.

I know some of our members in this debate have argued that we can allow a great deal of latitude. The hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), speaking of Mr. Lévesque said, as recorded on page 3893 of *Hansard* for November 3:

I believe, however, that it would be a travesty of freedom of speech if Mr. Lévesque did not receive an opportunity to express his views to the Canadian people. Only a sense of insecurity and a lack of confidence in the people of Canada would prompt one to suggest that the expression of that opinion would do Canadian unity harm. I have greater confidence than that.

The hon. member also has a blind eye because some of us remember an occasion when there was a threat to Canadian peace from the extreme right. There was a proposal that an interview with Mr. von Thadden be aired and the same member, speaking before a great assembly in Toronto, was bitterly critical of the C.B.C. for interviewing him. I agreed with him entirely. However, after a few months time, when we find the threat coming from the opposite end of the political spectrum, the hon. member indicates we can afford somehow to be more generous, and to be generous to the point of allowing the use of public facilities for a purpose leading to the destruction of our own national unity.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that when this type of broadcasting is done, whether it is done in the name of news or in the name of political affairs, we should know what it is all about. We are told that the justification for this sort of thing which we saw in the program "Seven Days" and later in the program "Sunday", is the basic right of the people to know. This is the justification for presenting anything at all over the airways of the public. However, I believe that what we are involved in there is a form of propaganda, and one that we should recognize as propaganda of agitation. I should like to go back to Mr. Ellul who has a great many important things to say on the subject of democracy in government, and even broadcasting, in his two recent books. Speaking of propaganda of agitation, he said:

Propaganda of agitation, being the most visible and widespread, generally attracts all the attention. It is most often subversive propaganda and has the stamp of opposition. It is led by a party seeking to destroy the government or the established order. It seeks rebellion or war. It has always had a place in the course of history. All revolutionary movements, all popular wars have been nourished by such propaganda of agitation.