

*Canadian Broadcasting Policy*

broadcasting companies and completely commercial transmissions.

• (4:40 p.m.)

To me the most interesting facet of the German system is that they have set up an advisory council upon which both provincial and federal legislatures are represented. In addition, the various democratic organizations such as home and school associations, civic clubs, universities, teachers' associations and so on have direct representation on the council, not by appointment by name but by appointment through office held. The advisory council was given the opportunity to advise the district executive officers of the national broadcasting corporation on matters of program content and on basic over-all policies. This has worked remarkably well. It has given the public an opportunity to have a say in programming direction in much of the broadcasting system. At the same time it has placed a direct responsibility on those who are appointed to manage the organization itself.

It is my hope that in the legislation which will follow this resolution there will be some provision for an organization of this type. Certainly it is not parliament which can in practice assume this responsibility. It may be all right to say that in theory it does, but it cannot really do so in practice simply because of the inadvisability on the one hand and the fear on the other hand of politics becoming directly involved in public broadcasting.

Another point of particular interest to me in respect of the German broadcasting situation is that there was no attempt through the public broadcasting system to set up a huge multimillion dollar organization so far as physical ownership of transmission facilities or production facilities is concerned. The whole aim and purpose of the national broadcasting system in Germany is to provide a certain type of programming and programming assistance without the acquisition and development of a huge physical empire. This is one of the fears I have in respect of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation because in terms of budget allowances for the C.B.C. we continually find in the estimates millions and millions of the taxpayers' dollars invested in buildings and in the setting up of an organization in the material sense rather than in the sense of facilitating a service, which I think is the basic responsibility of a broadcasting corporation.

There is another matter which should be considered in respect of private broadcasting. It has to do with the question of whether or

not public broadcasting should also be in the area of commercial sponsorship or whether this is an area which should be left completely to private commercial broadcasting. This is another aspect in respect of which a basic decision must be made concerning policy. Surely it is an extreme hardship on private broadcasting, which in my opinion is equally as important as the public aspect, when it must compete with a state subsidized organization such as the C.B.C. which does not have to relate its charges or costs to commercial income but can subsidize its commercial operations through the direct allotment it receives from the public purse. In Germany, for example, private broadcasting must earn its own income and pay its own way through private and commercial sources and public broadcasting is entirely the responsibility of the federal budget which supplies its allotment. It seems to me that we would be able to raise the standard of private broadcasting and relieve many of the problems it faces if we were to follow such a policy. Certainly it would be more equitable. I hope that this point will also be dealt with in the legislation.

Then there is the problem of the remote areas of Canada. This is one of the great geographical problems we face. From my contact with people who live in the remote areas, particularly the far northwest, it has become clear to me that there still is not adequate program coverage by the C.B.C. Certainly those people who choose to live and serve their country's needs in those areas should not, because of distance, be denied the same facilities and the same type of programming that is enjoyed by those who live in southern Canada. I also hope that the legislation will make adequate provision in this regard because this is a very urgent aspect of the broadcasting policy.

It would be possible to go on and on in dealing with the new legislation, but in closing I should just like to say that one of the moral responsibilities which I believe parliament has in respect of the people we represent is to make sure that we provide a basis for broadcasting in Canada which will not only meet the needs of our people but will do so in a more equitable and just manner. Perhaps this is a cliché which has been worn out by usage but I believe it is important. The Canadian people have every right to expect that the programs which come into their homes either through radio or television will be just as helpful as the water which flows from their taps. In setting up the administrative organization and in making provision for

[Mr. Thompson.]