

*Broadcasting Act*

The CRTC made its position on freedom of expression known not long ago in its ruling on the complaint against CKVU in Vancouver. A complaint had been lodged by Media Watch, after a program where the commentator expressed the hope that in a conventional war, the women of Media Watch would be at the front so they could be raped by Russian soldiers. The CRTC explained that the Broadcasting Act involved certain rights and obligations assumed by all licensees. One requirement is that programs must be of high quality. The Commission stressed that freedom of expression was not absolute and was limited by other legislation passed to protect other values that were equally precious. The CRTC agreed with Media Watch that the issue was not whether the women should be raped or not, and I quote:

The right to freedom of expression on the public airwaves cannot prevail over the public's right to receive high quality broadcasts that are free of denigrating comments or incitements to violence against any identifiable group.

*[English]*

The CRTC has shown a great deal of sense and sensitivity in its decision, but note that there was no remedy in the decision. There has been a lot of hypocrisy when the issue of freedom of speech has been raised. Where were the people who talk about censorship when women were demanding the end of censorship of women's news and the right for women to be in the news and to be part of public affairs programs? Why are the people who are worried about censorship not demanding that the protection that now exists on the basis of race, religion and creed be removed? There is certainly an inconsistency. Why is censorship only an issue where women's rights are concerned and nobody else's? I ask people to be consistent.

What are we going to do about this? Passing this Private Members' Bill today is only one step. I suggest that many others are needed. The Minister of Communications (Mr. Fox) is responsible for appointments. There is a vacancy for the position of head of the CRTC. I suggest that the Minister should be considering a woman. He should be considering a feminist. He should consider the stand on pornography of whoever is considered for this position. The CRTC should ask these questions as much as they ask questions on Canadian content.

The CBC has a board of directors. It is responsible for a great deal of programming. There is only one woman on a board of 15 members. There are four vacancies. This is shameful. It is not because women's organizations have not put forward names. I have personally recommended people, but it has not done any good.

I would like to support the recommendation which Canada presented at Copenhagen to the United Nations Decade on Women. There was already a provision encouraging "the fullest and most active participation of women at all levels of policy-making and decision-making within media organizations". Our Government put forward this addition, and I quote:

Governments should use the opportunities they have by way of appointments to regulatory bodies and broadcast networks to ensure that women are equally represented in senior decision-making.

We have only one woman out of 15 on the CBC board of directors, and yet that was said in 1980 in Copenhagen. Where is the Minister of Communications?

The CRTC must get tough on Pay TV and tough on pornography. Adhering to the guidelines on sex-role stereotyping should be a condition of licence for every station and network in the country. There should be the possibility of revocation of licence when there are serious violations. These are the public airways. Commercial operators make money by using them. We should demand high quality and concern for human rights when we in effect rent out our public airwaves.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan) has some responsibility. The obscenity laws are inadequate. They are antiquated. The language is bizarre. The Minister has proposed an amendment. It is a good amendment. However, it will not come up for a while even though he said it would be up shortly as long ago as last April. It will stress violence and add the notion of degradation. This is certainly moving in the right direction, but what we need are tough laws and much tougher enforcement. Pornography is a business. People make money from it. It is important that the fines that are levied make this business unprofitable.

The courts do not adequately understand pornography. In some cases their interpretations have been quite misguided. Certainly the fines they have imposed have been rather paltry. We hope to see a growing sensitivity on the part of the courts. We want to see many more prosecutions in order to really get rid of the problem.

Something else the Minister of Justice could do in bringing in tougher laws is to see that they are carefully directed. We want them to be tough, but we do not want them to go all over the place. We do not want to see people like Margaret Laurence, who has been harassed by the school boards, hindered by the Criminal Code. We need proper distinctions. The Canadian Association of University Teachers has proposed an eminently sensible one, in my opinion, to ensure that scientific research, political discussion, serious artistic and literary work will not be included in the definition of pornography. That would be a sensible approach and one that would make it easier to have really tough laws to go after those who are clearly the offenders.

● (1540)

I seek today, Mr. Speaker, approval in principle of this Bill. Simply referring the subject matter to committee is something which I would be happier to accept than having the Bill talked out. However, I would suggest that simply referring the subject matter to committee is not quite what this Bill deserves. Referring the subject matter to committee, would suggest that this is a matter which perhaps is a good idea but needs more study. We do need more study about what to do with the victims of pornography and about all kinds of aspects of pornography, but we do not need a study on the principle of the Bill. We need a clear statement of that principle and we know what it is. Wording has been developed that comes right out of the broadcast regulations. It would fit right into the Act