

Hon. Mr. LAFLÉCHE: Mr. Chairman, that subject was mentioned at a previous meeting of this committee. There is something in the record about that before to-day.

Mr. HANSELL: Mr. Coldwell brought it up.

The WITNESS: I think the Minister of Transport has now by regulation the right to ask for a statement, and demand also a statement as to the ownership. I do not think it is general practice that they must file a report, but I think the Minister of Transport by regulation can say to them that they must if required.

Mr. COLDWELL: I think they should be made available if necessary.

Mr. TRIPP: Is there not one department of the government that has all that information, the income tax department?

Hon. Mr. LAFLÉCHE: You cannot get it there.

The CHAIRMAN: The Department of National Revenue will have it all because all these people have to make a corporation return.

Mr. COLDWELL: That is confidential. The operations of the nationally-owned radio system are public property. I see no reason why we should not know something about these private stations. They come here year after year asking for privileges and we are entirely in the dark as to what justification there is financially for the requesting of these privileges.

The CHAIRMAN: The next brief that Dr. Frigon has to submit—

Mr. ISNOR: Mr. Chairman, before you go on with another brief—

The CHAIRMAN: May I make this short statement? The next brief which Dr. Frigon has to submit has to do with the representations made before the committee at the last meeting by Mr. Sedgwick. I have no doubt it will cover some of the business of private stations, and I think if he would present it now probably the two of them could be discussed further together.

The WITNESS:—

I am sorry to have to take some more of your time in order to take care of certain statements made here last week when Mr. Joseph Sedgwick appeared on behalf of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters. I believe you will find in my previous submissions my own answer to all the questions asked last week and our interpretation of the various situations that were dealt with. I shall, therefore, be very brief in my statement this morning and I would like to suggest that you ask me as many questions as you did Mr. Sedgwick when he was on the stand.

The dominating argument submitted by private broadcasters is that there should be competition—local competition, competition between networks, competition in television, competition in frequency modulation when many stations can operate in each locality, etc. "Competition for what?" The answer is "for audience", and there you have the whole matter in a few words. This calls for a race for popularity. Certain types of programs then become almost a burden and are broadcast only because you want to keep articulate minorities reasonably satisfied.

I do not pretend that all broadcasters will do anything to secure an audience; their code of ethics varies from that of the not too scrupulous to that of the high spirited publicly-minded citizen. It is evident, however, that the basic policy which influences a broadcaster has an effect on the type of programs he offers to the public and on the balance of his programs across the week. If the policy is to reach as many people as possible, then the inclination is to favour popular programs, but if the main purpose is to be useful to the public at large, the popular program becomes only part of the fare and not necessarily the main course. You have there two fundamental differences in purpose which cannot fully be