

*Broadcasting*

an influence other than Canadian to crystallize our identity and give us leadership. It raises the question of what balance we can put forward within our own broadcasting framework to offset this kind of development and illuminate our own leaders.

I can speculate that it would be impossible for the Prime Minister of Canada to have this kind of conference because of our different constitutional framework. Both the limitations and the advantages under which our Prime Minister operates are different from those affecting the United States president. I suggest, however, that our committee should be in a position to consider some of the developments opening up in the political field, such as the president's press conference, which was televised.

Another point comes to mind. I imagine that every hon. member from the Toronto area is wondering what is going to be the position of the new station in Toronto as election time comes near, in the amount of free time it will clear for election purposes. Is it going to carry the same broadcasts the C.B.C. carries? Will this be required? A second thing about this station comes to my mind. How will they sell their time to political parties, if they have time for sale? What is going to be the principle upon which this will be established? As the regulations now stand, I think there are a few loopholes that may need correcting.

We have had a situation in my own area where time has been available for sale to all political parties, and while it has not resulted in ructions bursting out, it could have done so. On one occasion during an election campaign I reserved some time. I got there first, so I was able to secure the last half hour of the campaign. Someone else with great influence came along later, and it turned out that I did not have the last half hour. I did not complain about it at the time; I felt that overexposure of my rival was perhaps to my advantage, and let it go at that. However, in another situation I think we would need a more hard and fast rule, and it seems to me the committee might explore this question.

I have a hunch that an election is not too far away. It may not be this year, but certainly if the committee is going to recommend anything in this field it is likely that it will have only this session to consider the matter; because I am sure that next session, if we have one, the orientation will be all to the hustings, and away we will go.

The hon. member for Essex East raised a question about the international service and its cut-down. This is the kind of issue that, speaking for our party, we regret very much; but speaking as an individual representing a constituency in the centre of the country

this does not arouse much interest. I know that the people in my area would not be particularly interested in this. I have to force myself to be interested because, in the centre of a continental nation, it is difficult to get concerned about the particular image of Canada that might be going abroad through something like shortwave radio services.

It is, however, a question with various sides to it. I suggest that in an ad hoc way officials of the Department of External Affairs appear before the committee and give us some kind of assessment of the impact of the programs as they have gone on, and in essence what their impact signifies in the impression Canada makes abroad.

The question of the cultural role of the C.B.C. and of private stations in the next year will probably hinge closely upon the 55 per cent Canadian content rule. It is awfully tempting to laugh at or become satirical about this 55 per cent of Canadian content. It reminds me of the beer labels that we used to have in Ontario showing the alcoholic content ranging from 5 per cent to 12 per cent. When you take a drink of whisky from something sold by the Ontario liquor control board you wonder just how much of it is water. There is something almost silly, when you look at it, about the rule that we are going to have 55 per cent of Canadian content.

Someone pointed out in a newspaper today, that if you listen to "Critically Speaking" you find that it may be a Canadian program, originated for Canadians, but most of the time the accent of the speaker tends to be English. We have had a great deal of difficulty with the census form in determining just what is Canadian. It seems "Canadian" means that you are a whole host of other things, depending on what your father once happened to be. This could go all the way back to Adam, I suppose, if you are a fundamentalist, and could raise tremendous difficulties. The same thing is going to apply in so far as the 55 per cent Canadian content is concerned. Our party's view is that this is a good rule, but its application will require not only fairness but, it seems to me, a certain sense of humour.

The orientation of so much programming in Canada tends toward metropolitan areas such as Toronto. Here again is something that a member from, let us say, a distant part of the country that is not within the sway of that particular metropolitan influence hears a lot of, and on which many complaints seem to centre. I am sure that the complaints with respect to the private stations and the private networks, the same as the C.B.C., will centre on the fact that we always seem to be seeing the same faces; that there is not enough variety; that we have too few hosts in T.V. for too many parasites in terms of programs.