

Radio and Television

and that the discussion has been constructive rather than destructive.

I hope I am not departing from that standard when I suggest that the fact that the amendment was made in the terms that it was, is a great tribute to this government, because after all this is one of the six motions, we were told yesterday, to go into supply. This is the fifth of the six motions which give to the opposition a chance to move a vote of censure on things which the government has done and which should be rectified, and it is interesting to see that after this parliament has been sitting as long as it has, the only criticism with which we are faced in this amendment is the fact that we have not proceeded quite as fast in dealing with the order paper as members of the opposition would have wished.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the minister permit a question? Did the minister observe that practically all of the amendments pointed to omissions and failures to act?

Mr. Nowlan: If we are only guilty of omissions of this kind then Canada is undoubtedly blessed in the government it has, and I think the majority of Canadians are of this opinion.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) quoted at length from the Fowler commission report, partly in the language of that commission and partly in his own, very adequately presenting the problems which face broadcasting and telecasting in this country. The hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Herridge) quoted at length from a speech which was made here a few days ago by the Minister of National Revenue and I am not sure which one of the two hon. gentlemen made the greater contribution to the debate. I suppose modesty would prevent my deciding that matter. In any event, I do not propose to make again the speech which the hon. member for Kootenay West repeated at some length last night.

Hon. members will remember that I discussed the C.B.C. on an ad lib basis for 20 minutes or so here the other evening, and certainly I am not going to repeat the observations I made then, though the fact that I do not do so does not in any way suggest that the circumstances have changed or that I have changed my mind with respect to them. Perhaps, though, I should make one comment or explanation, because I have had some letters from people associated with the television industry.

Apparently I said in a free and easy moment, and quite factually, that I thought the radio system in Canada was the best in the world. But I did not make the same

observation about television, and they thought there might possibly have been an implied criticism of our television programs. There was no implied criticism intended. We have some excellent television in this country but naturally, with the tremendous sums of money spent on television programs elsewhere, we cannot, perhaps, say that all of ours are superior to all of those that are available to the Canadian people.

The amendment itself simply regrets that the government has not yet presented its proposals for the regulation and financing of radio and television broadcasting and thereby removing the uncertainty as to the future of public and private broadcasting in Canada.

It is true, Mr. Speaker, we have not presented our proposals as yet, but I doubt if that is a matter for serious criticism at this time. I think hon. gentlemen opposite wanted, perhaps, to stake out a claim for themselves in defending the C.B.C. and also, perhaps in elaborating upon the Fowler commission, perhaps taking the copyright on that. And so, to use a slang expression, they rather beat the gun and moved this amendment yesterday. But because presumably in a week or two or certainly in the relatively near future I will be having to make another speech on broadcasting and telecasting in Canada when the government legislation is brought into the house, I am sure hon. members will not feel I am slighting them in any way if I do not deal in detail or in fact if I do not deal except in a very general way with the arguments they have raised.

I have made some rather copious and rough notes here which I shall review. I will have the advantage of reading in *Hansard* my remarks and those of hon. gentlemen who have spoken and if I anticipate correctly I will have an opportunity of speaking on this matter again in the near future and perhaps at that time I could clear up any points which hon. members have raised with which I did not deal this afternoon.

After all, Mr. Speaker, this house opened in May. We did not conclude the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne until well into the month of June. We have had the budget debate since then. We have also had five motions to go into supply. We have had legislation dealing with housing, legislation dealing with an extension of unemployment insurance benefits and the house has considered many other matters in addition to having had private members' days and the hours devoted to a consideration of private members' bills. At least it cannot be said that the house has been idle. The house has been sitting regular hours for several weeks and now we are moving to an extension.