

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

By this time she has no doubt received the letter Mr. Ouimet has sent in connection with her statement. It is one of the strongest letters I have ever seen or which has ever come to my attention.

**Miss LaMarsh:** "Arrogant" is the word.

**Mr. Nielsen:** The letter may be arrogant and I can find some sympathy with the minister here because I remember when this gentleman, as great a man as he is, appeared before the broadcasting committee and was asked questions concerning the implementation of the recommendations of the Glassco commission. He told us that the C.B.C. had a Glassco commission of its own. In his letter to the minister I believe Mr. Ouimet has been quite fair in requesting the minister to explain her charges.

**Miss LaMarsh:** Would the hon. member answer a question? Is he now suggesting to this chamber that any head of any agency who is responsible to parliament through the minister can require anything of the minister or the government? Is he now suggesting that the president of this or any other agency is above the elected representatives of the people?

**Mr. Nielsen:** I believe the minister will realize that I am the last person to have that kind of an idea, having said what I have said in the past in this house.

**Miss LaMarsh:** Let us at least be in agreement on that point.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Surely the minister does not believe that of me after what I have said in this house about bureaucracy and the dangers of the increasing control of that bureaucracy in respect of our way of life. However, in these circumstances the charges which have been levied by the minister require explanation. We have asked for an explanation here in the house but it has not been forthcoming. I believe the president of the C.B.C. and the entire management of the C.B.C. now have a right to a clarification. Indeed, it would seem that the Canadian people as a whole would require that a responsible minister should give explanations of the statements she has made.

Having referred to this letter to the minister dated November 3, perhaps I should preface any further remarks on it by reading the

[Mr. Nielsen.]

last paragraph. It appears to bear the signature of the president and the paragraph reads in this way:

Because you have made your charges public I deem it essential that the corporation's positions also be made public and I am sending copies of this letter to the news media.

The letter has become public. If I have a copy of it, for heavens sake, it has to be public.

**An hon. Member:** Not necessarily.

**Mr. Nielsen:** In any event, this is what the president says:

My purpose in writing is to request that you provide the corporation with all the information in your possession on which you base the charges of "rotten management" within the corporation.

He is not asking this in respect of himself, the president. He then writes:

When serious charges of this nature are levelled against the corporation or its people, it is our practice and duty to ask for substantiation of the charges by those making them, so that the corporation may take immediate steps to verify or disprove the charges and to take appropriate action.

There is nothing unfair about that sort of request being made by Mr. Ouimet, not as an individual but on behalf of the whole corporation. The president then writes:

You will understand that the corporation cannot allow your public charges to remain unsubstantiated.

I draw the minister's attention to all the questions put to her in the house since the charges. The president then writes:

Such accusations are capable of destroying public confidence in a national institution which must have the respect and confidence of the people it was created to serve.

Let me remind hon. members of the remarks just made by the parliamentary secretary when he was speaking about confidence. The letter then states:

Further, such accusations cast serious aspersions on the entire management group of the corporation throughout the country and may do irremediable harm to the personal and professional reputations of all those within this group. If your charges are correct, they must be confined to those responsible and the corporation will take appropriate action.

Surely that is a highly responsible statement on the part of the president. The letter continues:

If they are not justified then the reputation of the corporation and its people must be cleared at the earliest possible moment.

The news reports state that you have had in your possession for two weeks or more the information "that there are some absolutely appalling