

under the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which is an autonomous public body and with which the Government does not interfere and has no desire to interfere. The General Manager of the Corporation has issued to the press a statement which gives a full explanation of the application itself and the grounds on which it was refused. I have in my hand a copy of the statement and if honourable members will take it as read I shall place it on the Table that it may be printed in Hansard with the remarks I have made. The statement is one which, I think, will be of interest to honourable senators.

CBC Statement given to the Press by Mr. Gladstone Murray, General Manager of the CBC, January 5, 1939.

Mr. George McCullagh applied to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to buy time for a series of broadcast talks on the national network of the Corporation in order to give his views on public questions. The application was refused in accordance with the policy of the Corporation in dealing with controversial broadcasts. This policy is based on the principle of encouraging the free discussion of all subjects of public interest in round-table discussions, debates, talks, and forums, for which the Corporation provides time without charge. No individual may purchase any network to broadcast his own opinions and no profit-making corporation may purchase any network to broadcast opinions. Far from being a restraint on free speech, the Corporation's policy is an assurance that liberty of discussion is preserved, that all main points of view are fairly presented, and that the possession of wealth does not confer the right to use network broadcasting to influence opinion.

Having failed to secure time on the national network, Mr. McCullagh attempted to buy time over a network of privately-owned stations. As all network broadcasting in Canada is under the control of the Corporation, under the specific authority of the Canadian Broadcasting Act of 1936, the permission of the Corporation would have been required to give effect to the new plan. As the same general principle in controversial broadcasts applies to all networks in Canada, the second application was also refused.

Mr. McCullagh had already been invited to participate in the Corporation's Sunday evening National Forum at no cost to him. Mr. McCullagh declined the invitation, which, however, remains open.

The Corporation's decision and the reasons for it were communicated to Mr. McCullagh in a letter, dated January 5, which is now released for publication.

The decision was taken by the Corporation on its own responsibility in accordance with the policy laid down by the Board of Governors.

It is pointed out that the Corporation's policy regarding this class of network broadcasting is similar to that of the National Broadcasting Company of the United States.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND.

On the same date Mr. Gladstone Murray wrote the following letter to Mr. McCullagh:

Ottawa, Ontario,
January 5, 1939.

Dear Mr. McCullagh:

Thank you for your letter of the 4th instant. I shall be glad to set out fully the reasons why the Corporation was obliged to reject your application to purchase network time for the purpose of placing your views on public questions before the listeners of Canada.

In order that the answer may be complete, it is necessary to indicate the origin and evolution of the policy upon which it is based.

As you know, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was established by Act of Parliament as a non-partisan public trust to control all broadcasting in Canada in the public interest. In accordance with this purpose the Corporation was endowed with exclusive control of all network broadcasting and with a general responsibility for the character and content of all programs.

The relevant provisions of The Canadian Broadcasting Act, 1936, respecting the control and direction of network broadcasting are paragraphs 21 and 22, as follows:

"21. No private station shall operate in Canada as a part of a chain or network of stations except with the permission of, and in accordance with the regulations made by the Corporation.

"22. (1) The Corporation may make regulations:

(a) to control the establishment and operation of chains or networks of stations in Canada."

The relevant provisions of the Act relating to the Corporation's control of all matters broadcast in Canada is section 22 (1) (c), (d), and (e) as follows:

"22. (1) The Corporation may make regulations:

(c) to control the character of any and all programs broadcast by corporation or private stations;

(d) to determine the proportion of time which may be devoted to advertising in any programs broadcast by the stations of the Corporation or by private stations, and to control the character of such advertising;

(e) to prescribe the proportion of time which may be devoted to political broadcasts by the stations of the Corporation and by private stations, and to assign such time on any equitable basis to all parties and rival candidates."

I have deliberately set out the above provisions in order to indicate the intentions of Parliament. That the authority vested in the Corporation has been exercised as intended is perhaps best illustrated by the following quotation from the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting of 1938:

"The bulk of the evidence concerned the program, technical and financial policies of the Corporation. Your committee is of the opinion that these policies are well designed to carry out the purpose for which the Corporation was created. Your committee is also of the opinion that the policies of the Corporation are being executed in a business-like fashion."