

Broadcasting

on the committee in the last two years many professionals with much experience. However, we will never have two similar views concerning the value of one program as compared with another.

We have the responsibility, first of all, to examine the chain of authority within the corporation. Our second responsibility is to examine its financial structure to see if the Canadian viewer receives a full measure of value for his broadcasting dollar without our deciding whether program A is as good as or better than program B. I would suggest that our third responsibility is to examine general policy and to attempt to answer the question: Where are we going in broadcasting as a whole in Canada? What is the current trend and direction? I think those are our basic responsibilities.

I do not agree with those who castigate the corporation by saying that it is not fulfilling its responsibilities. It has shortcomings, of course, but by and large I believe it is performing a satisfactory service. That does not mean, however, that we do not have a large area of examination and of possible constructive criticism.

Another part of our responsibility is that of making an assessment of those programs which have a vital influence on communities all across Canada. I can think of many in this category. It may be considered that I am contradicting my former statement that we should not evaluate one program as against another but I feel this is a different area in which we do have responsibility.

In my hand I hold a newspaper clipping dealing with a broadcast which I believe illustrates my point. The author of the editorial complains about television cameras invading Springhill and presenting what he considered to be a warped version of the disaster that occurred there. I saw that program and I considered that it was somewhat overdone. I can think of others as well including the well-known program "Background". On one occasion it attempted to explore the question of Canadian and United States relations. It started out on the faulty premise that relationships were not good and in support of the argument produced opinions garnered from the man on the street, so-called. To me the whole tenor of the program created an allusion and then set out to prove it with unsubstantiated facts.

Why is this matter important enough for consideration by the committee? Does it not fall into the category of personal criticism of a program? Have I not contradicted an earlier statement I made when I suggested it was not our responsibility to evaluate one program as compared with another? I suggest it is something more basic than that. In

questions of vast national importance and widespread influence we have a responsibility to criticize the approach taken. In a televised discussion of the problem of unemployment, for instance, a subject of extreme importance, we as parliamentarians in my opinion have to assume some responsibility for examining and, if necessary, criticizing the approach taken.

I am not comparing "Hopalong Cassidy" with "Have Gun Will Travel" but I suggest that programs of the type to which I refer have an influence not only national but international and we have a real responsibility in this area. This is the general area of broadcasting I believe the committee should examine and the course I feel it should follow.

As has been suggested by other hon. members we should also examine the question of political relationships not only of the parties but of individuals. I confess that at this time I have no solution but I am confident that in our discussions we can arrive at methods by which we can make fair assessments. There will always be criticism on one side or the other but the corporation has the responsibility of reflecting the political aspect and environment of the country. What concerns me is that on some occasions they attempt to even things up by overdoing it with one party one day and then by going to the other extreme with another party the following day which is not a satisfactory way of carrying out that function.

In many of these areas of responsibility I shall attempt to do what I did last year. I shall attempt by analysis to come to some basic conclusions. As committee members we cannot ask more of one another. I agree with those who have said that this committee gives us an opportunity to attempt to achieve a constructive approach not only to small, isolated issues but also with respect to the future of broadcasting in exploring the question of what direction radio and television are following in the country.

In the meetings of the committee I will attempt as I am sure my colleagues on all sides of the house will, to see to it that the committee conducts itself in a manner that is a credit to parliament. It is my hope that the committee can return with recommendations that will win wide approval, not just on the basis of individual conviction but on the basis of sheer logic and which will be creative, constructive and beneficial to the broadcaster and public alike.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, the views of this group in general were very ably put forward this morning by