

*Canadian Broadcasting Policy*

question in my mind that regardless of programming housekeeping is of urgent importance in the field of broadcasting today.

For the last number of months, for example, the C.B.C. has been virtually without direction. It has a president who for all intents and purposes has resigned. At least one of the senior vice presidents has resigned. So far as over-all supervision is concerned, the C.B.C. has been without leadership for far too long. It is about time these vacancies were filled. However, I can sympathize with the government and the minister because I am sure it is not easy to find a man of the right type with the right background or, when such a man has been found, to convince him that he should take a position of this kind. Broadcasting has now become so great a problem that positions of responsibility within this field might well be considered as unattractive.

Nevertheless, the corporation remains the people's own broadcasting system, brought in to being by parliament itself. It is one of our most important institutions in that it contributes to the development of a national sense of purpose and an understanding of what is meant by "Canadian". In addition, it has the responsibility of providing programs suitable for Canadians across the board. In these circumstances it is a good thing that we shall be dealing in due course with the government's recommendations in regard to broadcasting and that the necessary resolution is now before us.

On many occasions over a number of years I have been extremely critical of the C.B.C. This does not mean that we in this group are opposed to the existence of the corporation. Indeed, I regard the C.B.C. as an important and vital part of the Canadian scene. Canada is at best a difficult country to govern. It is not an easy task to supply television and radio broadcasting to all the various areas, geographic or social, of Canada. Certainly this task is beyond the scope of private broadcasting if only because of economic considerations. I do not imply, of course, that private broadcasting does not have a role to play. Indeed, I would say it has a role of equal importance. What is discouraging to me is that the C.B.C. is failing to meet the requirements of a national broadcasting system. It is not meeting these needs as it should.

This is partly our own fault. How many times when we have endeavoured to bring to the attention of the government certain problems affecting our constituents, or sought to

obtain information from the minister responsible to this house, have we been told that it would never do for politics to play any part in the affairs of the C.B.C. and that it would therefore be impossible for the government to attend to the problems raised or to supply the information requested. On the other hand, when we address protests directly to the C.B.C. or require answers involving policy in any way, we are told by the corporation that these matters do not concern them and are the responsibility of the government. This is the frustrating position in which many members of the house have found themselves and for this reason I believe it is vitally important that there should be a complete change in the policy-making set-up and in the nature of the supervisory and administrative authority of the senior officers in order to place upon them a specific and definite area of responsibility for the policies followed in public broadcasting. A similar system should likewise be followed with regard to policies which govern private broadcasting.

It has been my privilege in recent years to have travelled in a number of countries in which there is a public broadcasting system and to observe, at least in an elementary way, the policies followed in those countries. I am thinking of the Scandinavian countries, of New Zealand, Great Britain, France and Germany. Of all those countries where I have seen a public broadcasting system at work, the one which has impressed me most is the one now functioning in West Germany. No doubt hon. members will recall the situation which existed in that country 30 years ago. Even then we were able to see that when direct interference with broadcasting was possible the democratic process became a secondary influence. Hitler, in his rise to power, found that though he could not gain the support he needed through direct political processes he could do so indirectly by taking over the broadcasting system. He was able to bypass his opposition in this way. Indeed, as I have said before, he really burned the Reichstag when he took over the German broadcasting system.

In Germany, having learned their lesson from what happened in the days of Hitler, they have set up a system which places responsibility directly upon the people themselves. This has been done by setting up an advisory council representative of all the democratic organizations in the country. The influence of this council extends not only to broadcasting such as emanates from the C.B.C. but to programs put on by private