

I appeal to hon. members to allow the subject matter to go to committee so that the committee can examine the LaMarsh commission and our own medical association, and all the evidence.

My final word is from Dr. Robert Liebert who is recognized as the distinguished authority in this area. He is of Columbia University, New York. He was the principal consultant for the United States Surgeon General. When he appeared at the symposium sponsored by the CRTC he said, and I quote:

"... the cumulative effect on children of violent television programming is like the planting of a bomb that might explode within 10 or 20 years. Every murder or violent act a child witnesses on TV," he said, "is like a small, even a miniscule weight placed on the balance."

We are playing with fire. Every day we lose is vital time lost. I again appeal to the House to allow the subject matter of my bill to go to committee. I do not want to have it on my conscience if this bill is talked out. That will be the vicious position of the last member who participates in this debate if he or she agrees to talk out this bill just to satisfy the pique of the Minister of Communications who has failed to provide leadership in this very important area.

Mr. Maurice Harquail (Restigouche): Mr. Speaker, I feel it is important for members to avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in the debate on such an important subject matter as that before us this afternoon in Bill C-229. Before I get underway with my remarks, I wish to read the contents of the recommended change to the Broadcasting Act:

The Broadcasting Act is amended by adding immediately after section 47 thereof, the following:

● (1610)

48. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the Commission shall by regulation establish guidelines respecting the portrayal of sex and violence during the broadcast of a program.

(2) No licensee shall broadcast a program portraying sex and violence contrary to the guidelines.

First of all I want to congratulate the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) on his tenacity. We know that for many months, indeed for many years, he has given of his time in an attempt to assist the community by ridding us of this problem, the abuses we see from time to time committed by the electronic media.

I received a communication from the hon. member recently in which he mentioned that the National Council of Women, the Canadian School Trustees' Association, the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation and the Canadian Federation of Women's Institutes have all gone on record as national organizations in support of the bill. I should also like to take this opportunity to say that during the period I spent in municipal government I sponsored a resolution from the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities to the same effect.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I remember that.

Mr. Harquail: I am sorry to report to the House that this was about seven years ago and that the Canadian Federation

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of Mayors and Municipalities has not taken the action I hoped it would. We know, now, what the results have been. Therefore when I learned of Bill C-229, I felt that since I had not experienced very much success in the small way of my contribution through the CFMM, I might take the opportunity this afternoon to support the hon. member's bill.

Turning now to the subject matter, I have some information I would like to put on record. According to Statistics Canada, 97 per cent of Canadian homes have one or more television set, and according to the Nielsen TV Index, pre-school children aged from three to five who are at home watch TV for an average of 54 hours each week, or approximately 64 per cent of their waking hours. By the time a child is five and reaches kindergarten he has spent more time watching television than a liberal arts student spends in the classroom throughout his four years in university.

The National Commission on Crime and Violence reports that American children and young people spend from one quarter to one half of their waking hours watching television, with only sleep consuming more of their time. By the time a child is 14 he has watched the violent assault or destruction of nearly 18,000 human beings on television. During an average year, an older child attends school for 980 hours and watches TV for 1,340 hours, so that by the time he graduates from high school he will spend between 11,000 and 12,000 hours in the classroom and more than 52,000 in front of a TV set.

We all know that figures can be shifted from one side of the picture to the other according to what side of the argument one prefers. That is not my purpose this afternoon. But I believe there is sufficient evidence to support the argument that there is abuse and blatant negligence—I guess that would be the word—on the part of some producers who seem to have been given carte blanche, wide open authority with huge budgets, to take us into an area into which I am satisfied and convinced the majority of Canadians do not want to go. When I think of the non-action of the CRTC and the negligence of the CBC in allowing this type of trash—I suppose that is the word—to be put before Canadians, especially young Canadians, I just do not feel that, given the mechanisms we have in Canada both federally and provincially, in this case federally, we should put up with it.

I feel we are in a position to bring in legislation or to give a direction in policy to have this curtailed if not arrested completely. I am not saying we should try to get into people's minds. That is an approach taken by other countries, and one which we all oppose.

I think that in every society people should be allowed to make decisions for themselves. Therefore, even though some people in the adult community might not be capable of watching this type of program I should like to leave it to their decision. Nevertheless, I feel some limitation should be imposed, at least with respect to pre-school children and children up to the age of 14, 15 or even 16, maybe, and that the type of sex and violence portrayed on television ought to be eliminated completely between the early hours of programming, whenever they get under way, 7 a.m. or 8 a.m., until at