

*Broadcasting*

has raised in the minds of many of its supporters the question whether it might not have lost the role it used to play.

The suggestion is that the effective commercial competition which the corporation is now carrying out with the private stations must mean, to some degree, a lessening of the corporation's old role as a leader in education and public affairs because it has had to move in the direction of more popular programs—variety shows, western stories, and so on—as a result of which the corporation has lost something of its reputation as a cultural dike. This whole cultural question is something that is almost in the realm of philosophy. It seems to me the only way the committee can handle it sensibly is to seek evidence from the heads of the C.B.C., the B.B.G. and the C.A.B.

There was some laughter in the chamber when the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi made the common error of appearing to confuse the C.B.C. with the C.C.F. I have felt the ramifications of this type of error. I have expressed criticism and C.C.F. supporters have asked, "What are you trying to do? This is really our organization." This does not mean they feel it is a C.C.F. agency but that it is almost completely what the C.C.F. felt a crown corporation should be and do in this field. It almost completely reflects our approach to crown corporations in the field of public affairs and culture.

I think we should look again at the C.B.C. because of the extent of its commercialism and the coming on the scene of private television stations. I believe we are in a period of great change and transition. No one really knows what is going to be the final squaring away, especially in terms of income, of this competition and the whole future of private networks.

In its approach this year I think the committee should be tentative in its appraisal. We should think more in terms of scrutiny than in terms of a report that would try to direct or influence. It is certainly apparent that the financing of the C.B.C. in its present form leaves the corporation open to a more direct form of pressure than was recommended by the Fowler commission, and more than was previously the case.

I know there has been great exception taken across the country by certain people and certain newspaper editorialists to the C.B.C.'s annual report and its suggestion that you are a shareholder in the C.B.C. and that for so much expenditure per head you get this wonderful programming. It has been pointed out that in this sense the C.B.C. is not really a company in which each listener is a shareholder, that this is a confusion you might say of the advertising men. The point is,

however, that the C.B.C. does cost us a lot of money, and as politicians we all hear pragmatic arguments in this regard.

For example, the maritimes have set up a hoot and a holler. They want the entire national hockey league game televised Saturday night. That is not the only part of the country that will express that desire. The argument is put to us at home that hockey is a Canadian game and extremely popular; therefore why should we not have it televised from start to finish. I know the minister will be well aware that such matters as the questions of cost and sponsors and arranging clear time in an evening are not arguments to which the people care to listen.

On the question of financing, the views we express and the recommendations we put forward in the committee could be related to what we think of the increased commercialism of the C.B.C. There is one point on which it seems to me the committee might spend some time and to which the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate could make a great contribution, because I know he was on the committee that reviewed the Canada Elections Act and discussed the broadcasting situation to a degree in so far as it affects politics. In essence, the political aspect of broadcasting in Canada was determined by that committee rather than by the one now under discussion. It is still an issue in my mind, however. It came closely home to me the other day in watching the complete, almost hour-long telecast of the press conference of the new President of the United States which came from a United States station and had a tremendous impact in Canada.

I think this will be the forerunner of a tradition that is going to make us again very vulnerable to United States influence. Because of its newsworthiness and importance, even in Canadian terms, there will be strong demand to have these news conferences of the President televised regularly and carried trans-Canada. I think it is the kind of program that would have vast appeal.

As a result of this I think the following question will be raised. What are we going to do about our own political figures, such as the Prime Minister, in presenting them to Canadian audiences? It may well be that if J.F.K. is the great president he seems to be in embryo, we could have the same kind of love affair take place between him and the Canadian people that took place between Canadians and F.D.R. If that should be the case it will mean that Canadians will come under the influence of a political figure who is not operating on the Canadian scene but who is the man next door. There is nothing tremendously bad about that, but it is a problem in that once again we will be looking to