

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

presented the facts from Viet Nam, asked this question—"Why are we not getting this other side of the story from C.B.C. news commentators and commentators?"—I can only come to this conclusion that Canadians are being misled by the news gathering and communications media in only getting one side of the story.

This act must be so clear in its mandate to the management of C.B.C. and the private stations that never again will Canadians be plagued with barefaced distortions and serious omissions over the air waves. If we are to play our part in shaping a workable world, we can only do so if we are given factual, balanced and fair presentations of news, information and viewpoints. Unbalanced presentations also lead to pressures on government that can be dangerous to the democratic system. Freedom is a precious jewel and it is our job to preserve it. This act is an important weapon in the continuing battle.

**Mr. Patterson:** May I ask the hon. member a question? To his knowledge has this Mr. Garth Hunt been asked to appear on the C.B.C. to present the other side of the story?

**Mr. Stafford:** I can find that out.

• (5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Sherman:** Mr. Chairman, I listened with a great deal of interest to the contribution which has been made in this debate thus far. I might say that although my hon. friend from Elgin and I sit at almost diametrically opposite ends of the political spectrum there is no contribution to this debate which has been made to date in which I concur more heartily or with which I agree more fully. From time to time I have had the opportunity to discuss the question of C.B.C. news and public affairs coverage with the hon. member from Elgin. This has arisen as a consequence of our mutual interest in the subject and through our good fortune in having had an opportunity to travel to the Far East last spring together.

I wish to say at this point that I do not intend to subject members of this committee to repetition or tedium with regard to many of the points he raised. I think it might suffice if I were to say at this point, and let it go at that, sir, that he has stated what I believe is a very compelling and cogent case and one which should be of extreme concern to all thinking Canadians. It is one which certainly is of great concern to me and I know to many other members of this house on both sides of the Chair.

I have a good many suggestions and inter-polations which I intend to inject into the examination of this legislation, as the examination exercise proceeds. When we reach the clause by clause study there are a number of suggestions I should like to make, and one or two amendments which I should like to propose. I appreciate, however, that at the moment we are deliberating in respect of clause 2 and I shall confine my remarks to the general coverage of that umbrella at this stage of the debate. In that regard may I say that I believe my colleague the hon. member for Acadia earlier today made an excellent case for control of C.B.C. programming decisions and decision making. He pointed out serious and in fact critical weaknesses in the proposed legislation. One portion which concerns me to a great extent is paragraph (d) of clause 2 which states that—

—the programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should be varied and comprehensive and should provide reasonable opportunity for the expression of conflicting views on matters of public controversy—

I think that this provision, sir, although philosophically one with which I can agree, is neither clinically nor mathematically strong enough, nor is it clinically or mathematically deserving of the endorsement of this committee in its present form. It pays mere lipservice to an idea. It does not go half far enough in laying down firm guide lines for control in the area of programming decision making, guide lines which I think are demonstrably necessary in C.B.C. broadcasting today as a consequence of the many controversies which have arisen in the past two years where public affairs programming, in particular of the C.B.C., is concerned. I believe the wording of that clause is simply the wording of a hollow pledge.

I should like to see a much more compelling safeguard against the one-sided coverage of controversial issues than that which is provided by the words in that paragraph. Later on in the deliberations I intend to move an amendment which contains wording which will meet my case and my point. The amendment will provide not only that programming by the Canadian broadcasting system be varied and comprehensive, and provide of course an opportunity for the expression of conflicting views on matters of public controversy, but also that responsible and balanced treatment of matters of public controversy should be guaranteed. It is not sufficient to say that we should provide only an opportunity for the expression of conflicting