

Radio and Television

At the time I sat on the government side, I called the attention of the Minister of National Revenue to the fact that French films shown on channel 2, Friday and Saturday evenings, were often of very doubtful quality. There already has been an improvement in this regard, even though we must recognize that there is no great choice in this matter since selections have to be made among films produced almost ten years back. But I do feel that if the Minister gave instructions in this regard, there would certainly be a marked improvement.

As regards the financing of radio and television in this country, I feel that we should favour increased spending. To my mind no Canadian would really object, because it would mean a more tangible form of assistance for our young people of talent. If we expect to compete with American radio and television, we must make it easier for our young folk to break into television by means of competitions and prizes that would bring unknown talent out of hiding.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a word or two about a speech delivered yesterday by my hon. friend from Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Pigeon). I will merely note a sentence which may be found in the official record of this house, page 2228:

Let there be a little cleanup job in the C.B.C.: let us throw out these people with warped ideas, leftist ideas, who grab half the television programs—

I have no wish of going into any details in this connection, but the hon. minister will have no difficulty in following me, since this is an extremely important matter. I feel that every newspaperman and every hon. member who sat in the last parliament, the 22nd parliament, will admit that we of the Liberal party have prevented politics from entering into the operation of Canadian radio and television. There is an old saying: "When politics enter the courts, justice is ousted".

Well, the day when we will let politics interfere in the field of radio and television in Canada, we will slowly but surely march towards totalitarianism. The word "cleanup" is often directly connected with political patronage. May I therefore be allowed to give some good advice to the hon. minister (Mr. Nowlan), and ask him to do as we did, i.e. to keep politics out of television and radio. As far as we on this side of the house are concerned, we will see to it that the government does not depart from the policies we have established in this matter.

(Text):

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): Mr. Speaker, I had hoped to reserve my observations until the Minister of National

Revenue (Mr. Nowlan) had had a chance to speak, because it may well be that many of the things I might otherwise say it would not be necessary for me to say and it would therefore have facilitated what the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) asked for yesterday, namely the speeding up of the business of the house, but since the minister is even slower than I in getting to his feet and since you, sir, were about to put the question, I seem to have no choice but to speak before the minister.

I should like to begin by referring to the subamendment moved by the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Herridge). Perhaps it is almost unnecessary for me to say that we in the official opposition will be very glad indeed to support the subamendment. We hardly think it is necessary, as a matter of fact, after the words which were said by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson). If one compares the terms of the subamendment, which can be found on page 2221 of *Hansard* as follows:

And this house further regrets that the government has not declared itself in support of the maintenance and expansion of publicly owned facilities in the field of radio and television—

—with what the Leader of the Opposition said at page 2215 of *Hansard*:

The proper operation and development of such a national system of broadcasting will be costly and will involve increased public expenditures in the future.

And then these words which I hope all hon. members will mark well:

It is imperative that we should be prepared to meet this responsibility if we want to grow and develop as a distinct nation.

I think it will be seen that the point has been dealt with. But I see no harm whatsoever in having this point stated explicitly as it is stated in the subamendment which was moved by the hon. member for Kootenay West, and we are very happy indeed to support the subamendment.

If I could think that the words, if I may put it that way, of the Minister of National Revenue when he spoke in the house on June 3 represented the considered and final views of the government, I should think it would not have been necessary for us to have brought this matter before the house. I must say I found many good things in the minister's speech; I found nothing much to disagree with except a very minor question of propriety as to whether he should have talked about the 15 per cent excise tax in the way he did, but I regard that as such a small fly in such an excellent ointment that I commend everything the minister said and I should like