

Canadian Policy on Broadcasting

fight. I went further and I said: you already have two stations, let C.B.C. take over one and let the other in the hands of private enterprise.

At the time, I also pleaded the cause of C.B.C. but I added that both private stations which were owned by Americans should belong to Quebec residents and this is my suggestion: Since both private stations do not operate according to the legislation, let them be taken over by C.B.C. and if there is a license left over, let private enterprise have it. Under such circumstances, C.B.C. would have taken over both, a French station and an English station.

This is what I suggested at that time when I testified before the B.B.G. I wonder if the minister was a member of the house at that time?

Mr. Marchand: No.

Mr. Grégoire: No? Well, I testified before the B.B.G. and suggested that the two private stations which were not at that time operating according to the provisions of the law should be nationalized by the C.B.C., precisely because they were not operating according to the law, so that the C.B.C. would have had both the French and the English networks. And if that left an opening, let it be filled at least by Quebec citizens, and Mr. Jacques Laroche was one of those who had made an application. This means, Mr. Chairman—and this is what I wanted to point out to the minister—that some Quebec citizens are interested in television at present. I am not referring to Mr. Laroche specifically, because this could be an open competition. Let the station sell its shares on the open market, but to Quebec residents, so that no foreigner could control anything as vital to the life of the people. For instance, a television or radio station is not like a paper. A paper can be started by anybody, unlike a television station. If the minister of manpower, the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) or I, for instance, applied for a license to operate a television station in Quebec city, and we were told that there were already enough, we must not prejudice the interests of existing stations, licenses must not be granted to just anyone, I would understand that. Since there is a limit, since there is control, since licenses are not granted to just anybody, there is all the more reason not to grant them to foreigners. On the other hand they must be granted to Canadians when they are willing to buy them, and that is the case now. There are

Quebeckers who are willing to buy shares in the Quebec city television station so that it might become a Quebec or Canadian station. These two arguments should change the mind of the minister of manpower.

First, the Minister of Finance set a precedent over a year ago by proceeding in similar fashion with regard to the Bank Act.

Secondly, I can tell him that there are Quebeckers who would be most willing to buy shares in those t.v. stations. I feel my argument about frequencies is important. If they are to be hard to get, they should at least be given to those Canadians who want them, and if they do not want them, we can always give them to foreigners. But there are Quebeckers who do want them.

So, I wonder if those three arguments do not induce the minister to change his mind, and if he would not be ready to support my amendment or to change one word in that clause.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Chairman, if I may, a few months ago, the cabinet formed a task force which should submit shortly a comprehensive report on the impact of the United States economy on the Canadian economy, and on the effect and impact of American investments in Canada.

At the time this report will be studied, I think we might perhaps be able to develop a comprehensive philosophy or policy in respect to American ownership or investments here in Canada, and to my mind, an accidental side approach to the problem, through some legislation, as was suggested by the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) is not actually sound and could lead to extremely serious prejudicial effects.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, I should like to point out to the minister that the question here is not an economic one—

The Deputy Chairman: I recognize the hon. member for Lotbinière.

Mr. Grégoire: Do I have leave from the Chair to reply to the minister? I only want to point out that the question here is not, by any means, to determine what impact the American economy may have on our Canadian economy.

It is rather a law to check, as the bill says, the influence of the American way of thinking, of the American mentality, in the field of the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada. That is especially what was