

least the house was given to understand that radio matters would be controlled by the new radio commission. Yet twenty odd days after its appointment, and three days before it was sworn in—not the minister, who was absent representing the country at a bull fight—I know he is not in the habit of fighting the bull; it would be unparliamentary to say what else he would do with it—

Mr. MANION: The bull fight is here.

Mr. POWER: In any case the minister was absent in the performance of his duty, and no doubt when the report comes down we will know that he represented Canada honourably and to the credit of the country. But while he was away, and behind his back someone issued a licence to a newspaper which is very prominent in the Conservative interest in the city of Montreal. It is said it is a small licence. True; but, Mr. Chairman, you remember very well Marryat's novels, you remember the case where it was pleaded that it was only a little one. But the crime is exactly the same whether it be a little one or a larger one. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that the committee require more explanation than that given by the hon. minister in which he tells us that Montreal is a great city. We agree that it is a great city, it is a wonderful city, and up to the time this government came into power it was progressing in a remarkable degree. And as to telling us that *La Patrie* is a big newspaper with a large circulation, and has as much right to have a radio broadcasting licence as *La Presse*, we agree with that too, but we submit that the issuance of a licence to *La Patrie* should have been done openly, frankly, and by the commission duly appointed by this house to issue such licences. Surely they could have waited two or three days more. If they had a right to have a licence—and I should be the first to say they have—the place to submit their claim was before the radio commission. It seems to me the minister is not really serious when he says that if the commission does not like it or does not approve of it they could cancel the licence. He knows very well that a large sum of money is involved in the obtaining of such a licence and in the putting into operation and maintaining of a proper broadcasting station and system. Even though this licence were issued without the proper procedure, issued injudiciously, wrongly, clandestinely, I do not think it should be cancelled, because it would involve too much financial sacrifice on the part of the people to whom it has been issued.

[Mr. Power.]

But I do believe we should have a better explanation from the minister or whoever was the acting minister in his absence.

Mr. CASGRAIN: Who was the acting minister?

Mr. DURANLEAU: I do not want to prolong the debate on this question. My hon. friends say that no other licences were issued since the Aird commission was appointed.

Mr. POWER: No.

Mr. DURANLEAU: I think my hon. friends are wrong in that respect. My hon. predecessor in the department made a statement to the house that no licences would be issued pending the report of the Aird commission—and I think I have made similar statements myself—except in cases where we thought we should issue a licence.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. DURANLEAU: Yes, in cases of fairness and necessity. And as a matter of fact I think we issued in Ontario—

Mr. EULER: CKOK, Windsor.

Mr. DURANLEAU: —two or three licences last year, one in Windsor, because that part of the province had no reception whatever from Toronto, only from Detroit, and we thought it was advisable to grant the licence there. I think we granted a licence in another place in Ontario, I do not remember exactly where—I think Port Arthur.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Is that a big city too?

Mr. MANION: No mean city.

Mr. DURANLEAU: So I do not think my hon. friends are fair when they say no licences were issued except the one to *La Patrie*. We have done so when the minister thought he should do it in fairness to those who were asking for the licence. That is my explanation. The licence to *La Patrie* was granted by the acting minister in my absence—

Mr. CASGRAIN: Who was he?

Mr. DURANLEAU: —and I do not see anything wrong in that move on his part.

Mr. LAPOINTE: That is terrible; that is the worst part of it.

Mr. DURANLEAU: It was legal; the minister had the power to do it; there was no law at that time preventing the minister from acting as he did. It was his power—

Mr. POWER: And he abused it.