

Broadcasting

of and concurrence in amendments made by the Senate to Bill No. C-55, respecting broadcasting.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the minister please tell us what are the amendments?

Mr. Nowlan: There are two amendments to the bill, one dealing with the section about Canadian interest or ownership. It never was the intention to interfere in any way with stations which already held a licence, and there is at least one of these stations, and possibly more, which because of the fact that their shares—namely the shares of a particular company operating a radio station—are owned by a company the shares of which are listed on a stock exchange that it might be impossible from time to time to establish the fact that they are 75 per cent Canadian controlled. The bill was therefore amended in the Senate as a result of inquiry made by the senators and I appeared before them and after discussing the matter I realized there was the possibility of some prejudice against two or three stations presently in operation in this country. I therefore agreed to this amendment.

The other amendment is one to which reference was made during debate to the effect that the president and vice-president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation should hold office during good behaviour rather than for seven years.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): The two amendments to this bill mentioned by the minister are quite acceptable to us. The first amendment, which will prevent any interference, is something which should be approved. So far as the second amendment is concerned, this is in exactly the same terms as we advanced in this house when we were discussing that part of the bill, and we naturally support it. I cannot, however, refrain from expressing my disappointment and that of my colleagues that we were not as persuasive in our advocacy of this change as were the senators. I do not want to mention at this late stage consideration of high constitutional principles in the relationship between the House of Commons and the Senate, but it is regretted that the amendment put forward in the house by us was rejected while the same amendment put forward by the Senate was accepted. With these few observations I wish to express on our part the acceptance of the amendment which we believe will improve the bill.

Mr. Nowlan: It was the persuasion of the hon. member in the house which, I am sure, laid the groundwork for the amendment from elsewhere.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): We have no objections to the amendments before us but we do feel, as parliament feels, that Canadian broadcasting should be in the hands of Canadian corporations. I realize that this amendment as it has been explained would mean that great hardship on these two or three particular stations might be avoided, but I wonder whether, if these stations should apply for an expansion of their privileges, such as an increase in their power and other facilities—in other words, if they should appear before the board asking for an extension of their power—they would then find themselves in a different position. I think it is one thing to say we will not interfere with them in their existing form but there is some difference as to the procedure which might be followed if they ask for an extension of power for their station, and so on.

I am wondering if the minister in a few words could tell us the intention with regard to that particular subject. Will it be considered in the very broad terms of this amendment which allow the governor in council a great deal of leeway in laying down the conditions?

Mr. Nowlan: I cannot, of course, speak for the board of broadcast governors as to what they might do in a specific case. Each application would depend on the circumstances, as the hon. member knows. All I can say is that the companies which appeared before the Senate committee and presented their arguments were perfectly satisfied with this amendment which was brought about in conjunction with the companies as between the Senate and the Department of Justice. I am sure that the circumstances in each particular case will be taken into consideration. There are only four as far as we know that could be affected, and their interests will be safeguarded.

Mr. Argue: Would the minister care to give the house the names. If he would prefer not to do so—

Mr. Nowlan: There would be no objection. I think there is one station in Toronto, another in Montreal and possibly one in Windsor. Frankly I have forgotten where the other two stations are.

Motion agreed to, amendments read the second time and concurred in.

SITTING SUSPENDED

Hon. Howard C. Green (Minister of Public Works): Before the sitting is suspended I should just like to say a word in my capacity as leader of the house by way of thanks to both the opposition parties and in particular to the hon. member for Laurier (Mr.