

*Broadcasting Guidelines*

referred to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to say this bill, which I had hoped would form a vehicle for debate and be referred to the committee for discussion and examination of the evidence, is to be talked out. I have learned that through the usual channels, and in saying that I do not reflect on any members of the House. I do not wish to reflect on the parliamentary secretary, who is doing his job, or on any member who may contribute to the debate; but as a legislator and parent I regret that this matter will not be seized of the attention of the Parliament of Canada, the only legislature in this country with jurisdiction in this area, and I say this despite actions taken by other jurisdictions. I think particularly of the LaMarsh commission which the government of Ontario set up and which recently brought down its report.

● (1600)

It is not my bill that is important, it is the subject matter that is important. My bill is merely a vehicle to get this matter before the attention of the House and, I hope, before the attention of the committee.

On June 14 I wrote to the Minister of Communications (Mrs. Sauvé), bringing to her attention the fact that the LaMarsh commission would be reporting and that my bill would be coming up for debate on this date. I stated that I had asked the government to postpone debate earlier because the minister was out of the country. I felt it would not be fair to her or this important bill if it came before the House while she was away. Obviously she then would not be in a position to have any input into it whatsoever. In my letter of June 14, which has not been acknowledged, I said and I quote:

I would like to point out that the bill was merely intended as a vehicle for debate and a means of providing the House with a reference so that the Broadcasting committee could look into this whole area. This, of course, is especially relevant in the light of the LaMarsh commission findings and my purpose in writing this letter is to ask your co-operation in allowing the subject matter of the bill to be referred to the Broadcasting committee so that parliament will have an opportunity to go into the findings of the LaMarsh commission, examine your own position in this regard and generally to call for witnesses so that a determination can be made by the committee as to just what action would be appropriate for the federal government to follow in this rather controversial issue . . .

As you know, the Canadian Federation of Women's Institutes, the Canadian Federation of Home and School Parent-Teacher Federations, the Canadian School Trustees Association and latterly, the National Council of Women representing over 750,000 Canadian women have all passed resolutions supporting the principle of my bill.

That is the end of the quotation from the letter. To set the perspective or the tone of the debate, perhaps I could give a brief history of what has brought us to this point today. In 1972 the Surgeon General of the United States, having been commissioned by the Congress of the United States, as a result of the findings of Senator Pastore and his Senate Committee, issued a report after a two-year study. In that report it is stated, and I quote:

The overwhelming consensus and the unanimous Scientific Advisory Committee's report indicate that televised violence indeed does have an adverse effect on certain members of our society . . . It is clear to me that the causal relationship

[Mr. McGrath.]

between televised violence and antisocial behaviour is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action . . . There comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. That time has come.

That was the Surgeon General of the United States in 1972. On February 26, 1975, I introduced this bill into the House, prompted by the findings of the Surgeon General of the United States and my own concern as a parent.

Following that, the then solicitor general, now the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Allmand), being the responsible and socially minded minister that he is, conducted his own study. In fact he made a point of going to the United States and speaking to the Surgeon General's people and Senator Pastore. He returned convinced that there was a relationship between the increase in violent crime in Canada and violence over television. Indeed he went so far as to say on November 17, 1975, as reported at page 9110 of *Hansard*, in reply to my question, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, we have had consultations with the CRTC and the Department of the Secretary of State on this matter and it is still under study. We may have more to say when the Minister of Justice and myself announce our package on violent crime before the end of the year.

That is how concerned the minister was. He wanted a provision in the bill on violent crime, the so-called law and order bill. That is the last we heard from the government on this matter.

The next event to transpire was the CRTC, as a result of my speeches across the country and the concern that was and still is growing from every source, especially parents, sponsored a symposium in August, 1975, at Queen's University, in which I had the honour to participate. The evidence is in the report of the symposium.

Finally there was the LaMarsh commission which was set up by the government of Ontario. It reflected the concern of that government, and the inability of the Government of Canada, the government which has sole jurisdiction to act. That commission immediately set up public hearings across the province of Ontario. I had the honour of presenting the first brief. The findings of the commission are clear, unambiguous, precise, and definite as can be. It said this:

The Commission was to determine if there is any connection or a cause-and-effect relationship between this phenomenon and the incidence of violent crime in society.

The phenomenon is television violence.

The short answer is yes.

That is a direct quote from the report of the LaMarsh commission. More evidence has very recently come to light. It is from the American Medical Association. I am sure one of our learned colleagues from the medical profession will probably participate in this debate. Referring to a poll taken by doctors of the AMA they stated, and I quote:

According to the poll, doctors said heightened aggression in children, nightmares, epileptic seizures and injuries resulting from imitating TV incidents are among problems that may stem from video violence.

That is a direct quotation from the American Medical Association on June 20, 1977.