

Canadian Policy on Broadcasting

Hon. members may wonder why Famous Players is so anxious to obtain these franchises, because cablevision is not that profitable an operation. One must remember the great intimidation that may exist. Not only should this system be under the jurisdiction of the board, but the act should be amended to provide that whenever a licence is granted the cable company must make an assignment of all its rights, title and interest, as well as easements for distributing programs, to become the property of the board in the event of default of the terms of the licence.

This may sound very drastic, but one must remember that these cable companies own the easement and have placed restrictions on titles. They now have tremendous power and they must come under the control of a government agency. They must not be allowed effectively to create a monopoly as they did 35 years ago ruthlessly and in a manner which would not be tolerated today.

It is not my intention to deal further with other arguments which I believe have little or nothing to do with this bill. I do urge the minister, however, to review this whole situation in relation to C.A.T.V. and to define very clearly so there will be no doubt that C.A.T.V. falls within the jurisdiction and control of this board.

• (9:00 p.m.)

Mr. H. R. Ballard (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we heard a very interesting discourse by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) in connection with the evolution of the parliamentary system in Canada over the past 100 years. I think there is a corollary or a similarity between the evolution of government in this country and the evolution of broadcasting. I might remind hon. members that this afternoon the Prime Minister gave some excerpts, some thoughts, some news reports of the situation as it obtained in 1867. He indicated that the object of the government of that day was peace, order and good government; meaning of course that as little government as possible should be administered in order to protect the people's peace and liberty.

We find that government in Canada today has grown to such an extent that it is the constant companion of every individual in this country. In this country today we find that government interference in a person's private life is proceeding at a faster rate than even George Orwell anticipated when he wrote the book "1984." I would refresh the memory of hon. members by indicating

[Mr. Otto.]

that in 1867 the budget of Canada was \$20 million. This year it is \$11½ billion. In other words, to make this more understandable, when our country was founded the expenditures of the government amounted to \$5 per head. In 1967 the expenditures of the government amount to \$575 per head. That is quite a change in 100 years.

We cannot go back 100 years in so far as broadcasting is concerned, but we can go back to the incorporation of the C.B.C. in 1932 and compare the thoughts expressed in the House of Commons by the politicians of the day in regard to their expectations for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. We can compare the aims and objects of that time with those of the bill before us today.

As a matter of interest I would point out to the house that in 1932 the whole of the debate with respect to the incorporation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the clause by clause study of the bill took up ten pages of *Hansard*. The introduction of this bill by the minister exceeded ten pages of *Hansard*, and I daresay that by the time we have completed our discussion on second reading and the clause by clause study of the bill we will have covered 200 pages of *Hansard*.

The thoughts of the politicians in 1932 were quite straightforward. They were simply put. It seems to me that the three principles the politicians of the day were trying to incorporate in the C.B.C. were those to which I shall now refer—and these principles can be seen from reading *Hansard* of the day. The first principle was that this country must be assured of complete Canadian control of broadcasting from Canadian sources free from foreign interference or influence. The politicians of that day had in mind items of national concern, national thought and ideals, and national unity. The second principle was that service should be provided to all communities regardless of size and location. The third principle was that the airways are owned by the people of Canada and are a natural resource. Those were the objectives in 1932.

We find in 1967 that we have gone a long way along the road toward state control and ultimate thought control. The objects of Bill C-163 are many in number but I will read just one. I refer to clause 2 (g) which reads as follows:

—the national broadcasting service should

(1) be a balanced service of information, enlightenment and entertainment for people of different ages, interests and tastes covering the whole range of programming in fair proportion,