

House to go through it all—a good deal of material from experts which suggests that family relationships are indeed hurt in many ways by children putting pressure on parents to buy products that they have seen advertised.

When he spoke on a previous occasion, the hon. member for St. John's East concluded his remarks by saying that the committee should have an opportunity to hear witnesses from consumer groups, from the industry, advertising agencies, government and the broadcasting networks. He said:

It would be able to evaluate the evidence and propose to the government a specific set of regulations to be included in the Broadcasting Act.

It is time that we acted on the whole question of protecting our children from television. The hon. member for St. John's East has made a commendable start and the faster we act, the better off we will be.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, looking at Bill C-22, we cannot but congratulate the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) for his commendable effort in bringing forward such a useful bill, particularly in 1973. We hope it will be studied and also amended by the committee because I feel it should not only prohibit advertising directed to children but also indicate a social policy to be followed by broadcasters in dealing with children.

Previous speakers have deplored, as I myself do the nefarious effects on young Canadians of the broadcasting of commercials directed to children. These are the reasons why purpose of the bill is to amend Section 28 of the Broadcasting Act. The purpose is to prohibit all advertisement during the broadcast of a program devoted to children. That is a good thing, but it is quite insufficient.

The committee should also take good note that, not only should commercial advertising be banned from children's programs, but it should also not be allowed to come before or after such programs.

The government ought to make up its mind, once and for all, to use the CBC and the other media to show only the very best material, where children are concerned.

Everything we see for children on television is negative. We ought, on the contrary, to be using this modern means of education to promote the healthy development of children not yet of school age who might profit from television's audio-visual possibilities, which are also capable of developing adults' educational sense, especially in the fields of sports and food. Television should not be exclusively an advertising medium for companies that want to sell our children their products and then include their advertising costs in the price of their products.

Television could also be used to give young people instruction in citizenship, good manners, patriotism, and even geography, to make them appreciate the natural beauty of Canada.

We could also use television for teaching languages to two-, three- or five-year-olds.

In a word, Mr. Speaker, television, which has so far been a very bad influence on young people, could be a very useful contribution to preparing them for the future.

Broadcasting Act

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I am 100 per cent for Bill C-22 and I hope that the committee will do all it can to ban advertising on television programs and allow broadcasters to make recommendations so that they can go on the air not with a negative approach toward young people or to use their facilities only as medium for sales and advertising, but to make young people benefit from educational programming in all disciplines.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to kill this bill because I am 100 per cent for it. I am making recommendations and suggestions which I think could be used by the committee which will study the bill to indicate to the broadcasters that broadcasting could be used for something other than advertising, particularly when it is beamed at youngsters who are not intellectually ready to tell the difference between what is wrong and what is good in advertising.

[English]

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say a few words on Bill C-22 which is designed to prevent advertising on children's programs. I congratulate the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) for again bringing this bill forward. I recall that it was debated about a year and a half ago and I congratulate the hon. member for being persistent and bringing it before the House again this afternoon.

It seems to me that there is increasing concern in the country about consumer protection, and surely those of us who have young families are concerned about the kind of advertising to which our children are exposed. I recall that when the bill was debated previously it was at a time when a code of ethics had just been adopted by the Canadian Association of Advertisers and Broadcasters and it was to be implemented within the following several months. It is my understanding that this code of ethics has been in effect for a little over a year and a half, and I think now would be a very appropriate time for this bill to be sent to committee for study. It would be a very appropriate time to call the advertisers and broadcasters as witnesses before the committee, to see how this voluntary code of ethics has worked out.

• (1750)

It seems to me that while a corporation such as the CBC, where the profit motive is not quite as strong as it is in private broadcasting, may be able to adhere to a voluntary code, the private broadcaster who is trying to make ends meet financially may be under more pressure and may not be able to adhere to that code quite so easily. So, Mr. Speaker, this is an appropriate time for the bill to go to a committee.

It may be argued that a voluntary code is better, from the point of view that we are not imposing something, but many of us are really concerned about the impact of advertising on children. I have received three or four letters concerning this bill, which is more than I would normally receive with respect to a private member's bill. It shows that there is in my constituency definite interest in this measure and, I am sure, in many other constituencies throughout the country.

It seems to me that our young people may watch too much television. Perhaps many of us who are busy in