

Adjournment Debate

grounds. It is not a good idea to proceed against them on the ground of obscenity because so many of these cases involve the explicitness of sex, and this is a tangential problem.

● (1830)

What is really objectionable is the portrayal of women in this way. If the programs focus on the abuse of women, that really will be what women object to, is really the heart of the problem.

I cannot stress too much the importance of stopping "First Choice". This is the thin edge of the wedge. We begin with a little bit of titillation, mere portrayal, mere exploit of portrayal and, if Pay T.V. is anything like the film industry, or anything like dirty magazines, they begin with something objectionable but fairly simple and move on to brutality. This is a very serious problem. If "First Choice" is not stopped, we are going to have pornography right across the country, and it will grow and get worse and worse.

I hope very much, Mr. Speaker, for support on this question, to put sex as one of the prohibited grounds, to make Parliament's intentions clear, to improve the climate in which this debate takes place. The women in Canada are very much counting on it.

Mr. Jack Burghardt (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, there has indeed been a great public outcry and concern registered in recent days regarding Pay TV in Canada. I want to reiterate what I said earlier, that the main intent, of course, in the use of Pay Television is to help the entire Canadian production industry as it relates to television and to broadcasting. Therefore, anything that is used by any of the licensees as far as Pay Television is concerned must be of a quality that will stand competition, not only with its immediate competitors but certainly with the public and private television industry as we know it in the country today, and on an international scale through the use of the satellite broadcasting system, which is here, and in many areas just around the corner. So we have to

be very concerned about program content and the inherent quality of that content. The CRTC does have the authority to regulate program content. We cannot escape that fact. It was given to them by Parliament.

The Minister has already expressed his displeasure with what has taken place in recent days regarding the particular application of "First Choice". He has, as the Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) has stated, met with Dr. Meisel, the Chairman of the CRTC. Dr. Meisel, in turn, has had his officials meet, and perhaps they are meeting right at this moment, with officials of "First Choice" Pay TV. Following that meeting, we expect that the CRTC will have a public statement to make.

I think we must also not forget the responsibility of the licensee, of the shareholders, and of all connected with the various applications. The Canadian Association of Broadcasters, an association made up of independent radio and television broadcasters across the country, has its own code of ethics, and it polices its members. Perhaps a suggestion can be made right at the outset that the pay television industry do likewise; perhaps it should look at the quality of program which it intends to produce. In light of the public outcry and pressure which has come to bear this past week, it in fact should look at what it intends to produce and televise. There is no doubt that if it does not, Government will have to step in and ask that certain stronger regulations and measures to be taken. In the meantime, it is the hope that the industry itself, because of the public concern expressed thus far, will take a second look at what it intends to produce and televise.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m.

At 6.33 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.