

*Canadian Policy on Broadcasting*

maintaining and improving the functions I mentioned previously. I have some suggestions I should like to make to the C.B.C. in this regard, because it is not entirely fulfilling its present role, let alone what we hope will be its new one.

Before I mention these, however, I believe it is important that we recognize the achievements of the C.B.C. in the past year. Much as we may consider public affairs programming to be of overwhelming importance and our own appearances on such programs as the highlights of the television week, I think we also must recognize that these programs have very low audience participation, not only in Canada but in every western country, and that the standard of a television system should not be judged on public affairs alone, which too often is the tendency here. Often more social attitudes are communicated through entertainment programs than will ever seep through the ponderous proclamations of public affairs quality broadcasting.

Apart from public affairs the C.B.C. has done a remarkable job in the past year. Its continuous and superlative coverage of Expo '67 and all the centennial events, its special coverage of such events as the visit of the Queen, its special centennial variety programs, and its general entertainment performance have indeed been of a very high standard. No broadcasting system anywhere has ever had so much to cover and done it so well while in the same year the conversion to colour had to be made which by no means is a simple operation. C.B.C. programs have continued, as in the past, to quietly receive international awards of excellence in all fields. C.B.C. radio has earned a quiet place in the lives of many Canadians as the only alternative to the mind diversion which in general is the function of other radio stations in Canada.

The C.B.C. has done a good job. It has done a better job than most of us give it credit for, primarily because we become concerned with the C.B.C. usually only when it has done something we consider to be wrong. Certainly it has far surpassed anything the private broadcasters have done, as of course it should, given its public financial support and its mandate. If it has not been sufficiently Canadian in content, that is something which has been incumbent upon it because of the old act. If it has not produced a public image of internal efficiency, this has a great deal to do with the amount of time spent—and I have referred to this—by its senior

executives responding to the numerous demands of all those people investigating it and also has to do with the uncertainty with which the corporation has had to contend in awaiting this bill and, more important, the new officers.

At this point I should like to pay tribute to Mr. Ouimet who soon will retire after a lifetime of service to the C.B.C. He has made mistakes during his presidency; he would be superhuman if he had not. We all make mistakes. He has sometimes acted in a way which those of us who know less than he have condemned through our public statements. But I know of no Canadian anywhere in this country who is more passionately and sincerely devoted to a simple love of Canada and the cause of national unity than this very honourable man. He is one of the few who can live in either a French or English Canadian atmosphere and feel at home. He has led the C.B.C. through its most difficult periods of development and adjustment to new circumstances. He has served with a modest integrity which I find superlative. Above all, he has been a committed devotee to the concept of public broadcasting and its responsibilities; he has given his life to a realization of that concept. We owe him a debt of gratitude which cannot be repaid in words.

We must now look to the future of the C.B.C. I hope that somehow this beleaguered corporation can now look forward to a few years of peace during which it can put its house in a new order, because a new order is called for and it must take place with swiftness. Too many people in positions of responsibility, whose motives are above reproach, in recent times, have indicated that the C.B.C. French network has strong separatist tendencies in some areas. This is evident from the programs which appear on the French system. I dealt with this at the beginning. With reference to the criticism in this area, I do not see how it will be possible for the C.B.C. to cope with this in a constructive way unless the present C.B.C. management and the new C.B.C. management have the complete confidence of parliament and of the government, because if that type of confidence is not established I reiterate that this fact will be swiftly known to the Canadian people and to the employees of the corporation. It is beyond me how one can govern a corporation with 8,000 employees and be held responsible for their conduct in respect of all these programs when the employees themselves are all too aware that the management

[Mr. Munro.]