

Mr. BERTRAND: I should like to ask a few questions before we leave the present subject, if you do not mind, Mr. Diefenbaker.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: No, I do not mind. Go ahead.

*By Mr. Bertrand:*

Q. Mr. Chairman, may I just say that I was very much interested in the questions asked by Mr. Hackett, one of the exponents, shall I say, of the old type aristocratic politics, and I compliment him for it. I think what was referred to in his questioning this morning was the free period of time on the C.B.C. with regard to the controversy on the plebiscite of 1942. Is that correct?

Mr. HACKETT: Yes.

Mr. BERTRAND: Was that controversy considered by the C.B.C. as a political controversy?

Dr. FRIGON: You mean party politics?

Mr. BERTRAND: I mean the plebiscite in 1942. Was it considered as a political controversy?

Dr. FRIGON: Well, that is very difficult to answer at this time, especially by myself.

Mr. BERTRAND: All right.

The VICE CHAIRMAN: I do not think it is a fair question.

*By Mr. Bertrand:*

Q. That is all right. I will not press that question, then. But apparently there is a White Paper controlling the free time to be given on the CBC on political controversies. Is that correct?—A. That is right. It lays down the principles.

Q. Was there a standard by which the C.B.C. could justify itself in giving free time to other parties than to the parties that were given time during that controversy?—A. I am afraid, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Bertrand, that I am rather at a loss, not being familiar with that, not knowing this was coming up and not having looked into the background of the whole thing. The White Paper does lay down—I think it was in a different form at the time—the principles governing broadcasting by political parties. Perhaps Dr. Frigon could answer that.

Dr. FRIGON: I think the answer there might be this, that there were different parties who pleaded in favour of an answer "yes", and certain groups in Québec who wanted the voters to vote "no". Whether you call it political or otherwise, I do not know. It was not a party political issue. It was an issue as to a measure to be taken by the country. Whether it was voted down or sustained, it did not affect any particular political party, to my understanding.

Mr. HACKETT: I should like to say this, Dr. Frigon, if you would permit the interjection, and I do not object to your not wishing to define what is a political issue. I think we must realize that it was put forward by the government of the day and admit that fact. It probably is not necessary to go any further. It did constitute an issue.

Mr. BERTRAND: Then I want to put one further question. Was the C.B.C. justified, according to the standard of the White Paper, in giving free time to any other organization than the one it gave free time to during that controversial period on the plebiscite?

Dr. FRIGON: Would you repeat that question, please? I did not quite catch it.

Mr. BERTRAND: Yes. According to the White Paper and the standard established there, was the C.B.C. able to give free time to any other organization than the one it gave it to during that controversial period of the plebiscite of 1942?