

Canadian Policy on Broadcasting

even as the minister is making her charges the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), the leader of the government, is publicly praising the C.B.C. for the excellent job it has done. Further complicating the situation is the fact that the president of the C.B.C. voluntarily resigned over a year ago but was urged to stay on by this same government.

Here we have a situation where a minister in charge of a crown corporation is being challenged, most unwisely, I believe, by a man who is responsible not just for the C.B.C. but to the minister herself and through her to the parliament of Canada. It is clear that the minister herself has been most unwise in the type of blanket charges she has made, particularly since she has not specified those charges for the information of those to whom she is responsible, not the management of the C.B.C. but the parliament of Canada and, through its members, the people of Canada.

I was astonished, as were many other hon. members, to hear her say in reply to the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) the other day: "It could be no secret to anyone who knew anything about broadcasting that there was a problem of management." I agree with that. Then the minister went on: "But what I learned about in the past few weeks was very much worse than that." It is the last part which concerns us most. What are these unknown things which the minister has learned about in the past few weeks? Surely we in this parliament as well as the people of Canada have a right to know. On behalf of the people of Canada this parliament provides more than \$160 million annually for the C.B.C. and I believe our people have an inalienable right to know how their money is being spent.

Perhaps the minister spoke out of sheer frustration the other day. It is surely clear that all the blame for this unsavoury situation cannot be laid at her doorstep. It is the Prime Minister who has continually frustrated attempts to name a new head of the C.B.C. and who has continually expressed views directly opposed to those of the Secretary of State, making her position at times untenable. The Secretary of State may have been indiscreet but there are many people in Canada who believe that at least she was honest in what she said.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Brand: I would commend that particular view to members of the press gallery.

[Mr. Brand.]

How can we in this context hope to understand or improve the bill before us unless we have an opportunity to hear the full story as it should be placed before members of the standing committee on broadcasting? It is for this reason I have moved my amendment and I urge the house to give it consideration realizing that on this side we are totally sincere in our efforts to expand and improve the legislation before us. I repeat that by this manoeuvre we have no intention of trying to kill the bill. But we cannot do a proper job until we know what the facts are, and this will be one of the results of bringing the bill before the committee prior to second reading.

While hon. members are studying the amendment, perhaps I may make a few of the remarks I had intended to make prior to the occurrences of the last few days. When the Prime Minister finally answered my question regarding C.B.C. coverage in Saskatoon the reaction of the citizens of that city was entirely predictable. The Saskatoon Board of Trade, through its commissioner, Mr. Bert Saltoum, said it was inconceivable that the federal government should shelve the plans and expressed extreme disappointment about the decision.

• (5:10 p.m.)

As reported in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* of November 2 he said:

In the light of all the facts, the board cannot understand the government decision. It notes that the longer the project is delayed the more it will cost when eventually built.

The report continued:

Mr. Salloum said a cut-back on government spending was carried on on this project until the freeze was lifted last year and the C.B.C. applied to the Board of Broadcast Governors for the Saskatoon station. "The B.B.G. approved the application and since then the matter has been awaiting cabinet approval."

"Saskatoon, it was said, would have a second television outlet by the fall of 1968?"

The article went on to quote a statement made by the minister in charge of the C.B.C. in which she said:

I concur that a proposed C.B.C. television outlet for Saskatoon is of critical importance and I can assure you that utmost consideration is being given to it.

Commissioner Salloum added:

In the light of all the facts, we cannot understand the government decision.

The mayor of our city, Sidney Buckwold, also got into the act and, as reported in the