

*Broadcasting House Proceedings*

and for many of the editors in this country—if you are a one newspaper organization or you are the only newspaper in town, you have to show that you are not the establishment even though in fact you are. How do you show this? You show this by attacking everything that exists. I feel that very often the newspapers—less so the television and radio—see themselves as the official opposition. It is very difficult to get any kind of statement out of here if the press gallery does not accept it as important.

It is the press gallery that sees itself as the official opposition and, to some extent, treats the opposition with contempt, treats the opposition in the way a puppeteer treats his puppet. They have to jump according to the issues they think are important. If they think scandal is going, scandal is what the opposition must talk about, even though the problem is unemployment. We in this party have seen unemployment as being a serious issue just now. Now the media is picking unemployment as an issue. We have been saying it for six or eight months while the media have been screaming scandal on their front pages. The greatest scandal in this country is the fact that there are 800,000 people out of work, and there is a government that is not doing very much about it. It is that kind of bias that exists in the newspapers, and I do not know that anything can be done about it.

● (2150)

To tell the newspapers what to print is unthinkable. That is the last thing we want, but we have to recognize what is happening to the media, and we have to recognize that *Hansard* is faceless and opinionless—it just records what we say—and this House desperately needs to have something which records exactly what is said and something which is not interpreted to tailor the headlines for a particular day or the editorial needs of a particular medium. This resolution will favour the government because the government, bad as it is, never looks as bad here as it looks in the press.

Judging by the press one would think the government never did anything right. I at least concede that occasionally it does something right, but one would never know it from reading the press. I seldom feel too terribly sorry for the government, but there have been occasions when I have. There have been occasions when charges have been made by the opposition, or by writers and reporters, and the minister involved has come out with what I thought was an irrefutable argument against those charges. Whereas the charges were banner charges, the refutation of the minister might have taken a paragraph on page 17: "The minister says that is not so", and they print only part of what the minister had to say.

I think our society is in danger of tearing itself apart. There can be such a thing as institutionalized criticism or institutionalized bias against the things which hold this country together, and those cements are not all that powerful. There has to be some way of enabling each side to be heard, each side to stand on its own—the public has enough intelligence to examine, and people do not need any editorial comment to go with it—and that is what television will do for this House.

[Mr. Saltsman.]

From what I have been able to read, one of the reasons *Hansard* was brought into the British House of Commons was that while reporting was not allowed, just as television is not allowed in this Chamber, reporting in fact always took place whether allowed or not. The problem was that the reporting was not responsible, it was inaccurate, and it was biased. The British House realized reporting would take place anyway, so they wanted it at least to be factual, and that is how we got *Hansard*. Televising the House of Commons would be an extension of *Hansard*.

I would like to use a quote I found in something called "The Procedure of the House of Commons" by Joseph Redlick, 1908. It reads as follows:

The great Dr. Johnson was one of the regular reporters: he gave accounts of parliamentary affairs in the leading periodical, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, under the mask of proceedings of the Senate of Lilliput or of Rome.

Then in a footnote the author puts this down:

Dr. Johnson afterwards confessed that he had himself composed many of the parliamentary speeches published by him, or at all events had freely ornamented them as he thought fit. In doing so he claimed to have held an even hand between the two parties: at the same time he declared that he had "taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it."

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Newspapers haven't changed much, have they?

**Mr. Saltsman:** Well, at one time I would have put it a different way. There was a time not so long ago when there were more newspapers in places like Toronto or some of the other cities when in fact there was a biased Liberal press and a biased Conservative press. Those of us in the NDP or the CCF were fully aware of what kind of press we used to have, and in fact, just like the House of Commons, the Liberal press would go exactly for the Liberal line, the Tory press would go exactly for the Tory line, but at least there was some kind of balance in that. At least we knew where they stood. There was a time when I first came here when there were what were known as government reporters who had the inside track with the government and who took handouts from the government. I suppose where there was biased press or partisan press, that is what it was about. If the government had a story to leak, it was not leaked to the television networks; it was given to one of its inside reporters, and it suddenly showed up as an exclusive.

If there was a Conservative government, the story would show up as an exclusive in a Conservative newspaper; if there was a Liberal government, it would show up as an exclusive in a Liberal newspaper. Those days have passed because of changes in newspaper ownership and because of the change in the nature of the media, and we have to recognize that. For all the evil in that old system—and it was a pretty evil system in the sense that newspapers were either for this party or that—at least everybody knew what the colours were. If people did not like what one newspaper had to say, they could go to another one, or they could buy them both and make a comparison, although in fact few people ever did. They simply bought the newspaper which happened to reinforce their own particular prejudices and stayed with it rather than look for an unbiased position. However, in fact the thing which may save