

*Supply—C.B.C.*

Glassco commission had something to say about this last item, but again its remarks were rather general. There are other problems, such as the standards of programs both on the C.B.C. networks and in private stations which I do not wish to raise at this stage.

When the present government assumed office, it was already aware of those urgent and complex problems. In May 1963, my predecessor, the Minister of Transport, asked three gentlemen—Dr. Stewart, chairman of the B.B.G., Mr. Ouimet, president of the C.B.C. and Mr. Jamieson, the president of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters—to consider some of the problems and questions I have cited here. The joint report of the so-called troika and the three separate reports of its members were tabled in the house on May 25. We were not surprised to see the limited areas of agreement shown in those reports because when my predecessor had announced the creation of the troika, he had described it as “an essential first step to a new definition of public policy” and as a preliminary step to a public inquiry.

When those reports were tabled in the house, I immediately announced the establishment of an advisory committee on broadcasting with comprehensive terms of reference and experienced members. The Fowler committee has since been hard at work. Numerous briefs are being received from individuals and private groups. The most recent developments in the United States and Europe are being carefully considered. Expert consultants have been assigned special studies on particular problems including the structural organization, the methods of operation and the main consolidation projects of the C.B.C. I have and the government has complete confidence in the committee and its work. When its report has been submitted in the first part of 1965 as expected, it will be made public immediately; the government will introduce new legislation as soon as possible thereafter and, at the proper stage, the proposed measure will be referred to a parliamentary committee. The examination that such a committee will then be in a position to make will, I am sure, be most useful.

It would seem that very few people are satisfied at the moment with present legislation and arrangements in the field of broadcasting. Private broadcasters, of course, are here to stay. They have a very important role to play in our community life. They know that this role is not limited to presenting more American shows than the C.B.C. does

or programs of lower quality than those of the public network. They are more and more conscious of the fact that they are not exempted from their public responsibility only because consumers may pay a greater share of their costs than taxpayers. However, they also realize that it is very difficult to improve and, at the same time, continue to compete, if common standards are not applied to all.

A number of Canadians believe that the administrative efficiency of the C.B.C. and the content of certain of its programs should be improved and that the corporation should be more conscious of the national and public interests it has to serve. No doubt improvements are called for. Some are being made at the present moment; others will have to wait the implementation of new legislation or the completion of the consolidation projects. It is equally evident that an institution like the C.B.C., operating in such a complex and touchy field of activities will never be able to fulfil its true role with dynamism and creative imagination and satisfy everybody at the same time. This certainly does not mean that the right to criticize the C.B.C. should be denied or that the corporation should not be accessible to parliamentary supervision. It does not mean either that the C.B.C. should become cynical about criticism and negative when sound suggestions are made. It means that criticism and supervision must be such as to strengthen and improve the C.B.C., not to weaken and destroy it.

The C.B.C. has a very high reputation in the world. The rank it has gained among the broadcasting systems of the world and the great number of international awards it has won prove it. It is the envy of a great number of other countries and people including many Americans. The C.B.C. has made a major contribution to the development of our country in the fields of entertainment, information and knowledge. It has enriched our intellectual life by helping our artists and our artistic groups. It has made culture in its broad and truly human sense, more accessible to the general public. The C.B.C. is one of Canada's most vital and essential institutions, at this crucial moment of our history. The C.B.C. must become more than ever before a living and daily testimony of the Canadian identity, a faithful reflection of our two main cultures and a powerful element of understanding, moderation and unity in our country. If it performs these national tasks with efficiency, its occasional mistakes will be easily forgiven; if it fails in that