

the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the year ending March, 1956. In doing so I feel it will make a basis for discussion. Later on the debate it is my intention, with reference to the appropriations which we wish to have passed on by parliament, to give in some detail the amount of money that is to be spent and the purposes for which it is to be spent.

However, the hon. member for Eglinton, who has usually acted in the capacity of critic of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's activities is, I think, probably eager to go to his native city tonight, and for that reason I am very happy to give him the opportunity to enter the debate and I shall defer what I have to say further until a later time.

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister. There are eight items before the committee in relation to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It has been our practice in other years to take the group of items pertaining to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in order that there might be an ample discussion of general policy in relation to the corporation, and I presume that would meet with the approval of the committee now.

The first of the items is No. 54, a grant of \$6,250,000. The second is a statutory item estimated at \$17 million, the proceeds of the excise tax both on radio receiving sets and tubes and on television receiving sets and tubes. Items 55 and 56 are for the short-wave broadcasting. Item No. 605 of the supplementary estimates is an item of \$12 million, a grant to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Items 606 and 607 are supplementary items in relation to the international short wave service. Those seven items total \$37,263,976.

There is an eighth item providing for a supplementary grant to the Fowler royal commission on broadcasting of \$170,920. Of those eight items those pertaining to the domestic operations of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation alone total \$35½ million.

This year we have had no committee of the house reviewing the operations and the report of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Early in the session I asked that these particular items of the estimates should be referred to the committee on estimates. That request was refused. I then asked the Prime Minister if the government would agree to the setting up of a special committee on radio broadcasting and television similar to that which was set up during the 1955 session. The Prime Minister rejected that request because the royal commission was sitting. Those requests and answers are to be found at page 2128 of *Hansard* for March 14 of this session.

I regret that we have not had a committee where these matters could be reviewed in greater detail. It is an important responsibility that parliament takes in voting these large sums of money for any purpose, not the least of all in relation to such important matters as radio broadcasting and television. Whether or not the royal commission is sitting, parliament is still called upon to vote substantial sums of money. For my part I regret that the government denied the opportunity for the detailed type of scrutiny which is possible in committee, and which in my opinion is necessary in the public interest. The direct contact between parliamentary committees and the officials of the corporation is, I think, good for both.

It was on July 26, 1955, a year ago, that in response to repeated requests from the opposition the Minister of National Revenue announced that the government intended to appoint a royal commission to review policy in general in relation to radio broadcasting and television. The commission was not actually appointed and set up by the government until December 2 and did not commence its public hearings until April last. I have expressed regret before at the delay in the appointment of the commission and the commencement of its very important work. I do not intend to comment upon the hearings as such, but shall content myself with observing that we look forward with great interest to receiving the report of this royal commission. The minister has indicated in his remarks that it is expected the report will be available at the next session for review here, and I trust that the house will have a fruitful discussion upon it and its recommendations at that time.

In the meantime let me state—I am putting it briefly under the circumstances—that we of Her Majesty's loyal opposition assert the views that we have set forth in the house on previous occasions in regard to the appointment of an independent regulatory tribunal in the public interest to regulate all forms of radio broadcasting in Canada. I do not need to repeat but I reassert the views which were expressed by us in the debate on July 26, 1955, as found at page 6842 of *Hansard*.

Similarly the views that we have expressed in regard to government policy in relation to the licensing of stations for television remain as we set them forth a year ago on the same date, to be found at page 6844 of *Hansard*. We deplore this policy of local monopoly in television broadcasting. We think it has delayed the development of Canadian television and has denied alike to C.B.C. television stations and privately owned stations the benefits and stimulation of Canadian competition. We all know that