

ern Research, for instance, to go south of the border and research this system?

The decoder may be a bargain at \$2,000 because it gives deaf people a chance to hear the things the rest of us hear. What more right have I, who can hear and see, to view the televised proceedings of parliament which is paid for by the taxpayers of this country, some of whom are deaf? Why can this decoder not be used so that they too can follow the proceedings? Are they not entitled to hear the hockey game that is being broadcast tonight? We are shutting these people out of many things because they are a quiet minority, and I say we have to do something about it.

Deaf people are often very innovative. Some of them took the old CN and CP teletype machines and converted them so that they could be used with the telephone. When you punch the keys a light comes on at the number you have dialed, the person there picks up the receiver and they can communicate back and forth. Why are we not pursuing this and getting ahead of the United States, instead of just waiting to copy them as we usually do?

I want to point out to the parliamentary secretary that it costs about \$1 million to institutionalize a deaf person for 30 or 40 years. Yet they say the decoder only costs \$2,000. Then when the unemployment rate goes up because it is hard for those persons who are a little hard of hearing to get a job, they look at them and say "no". I am not taking anything away from the government or manpower, because I know what they try to do, but look at what has been the response. Hon. members know the response as well as I do: it has been terrible. They just do not get it in this workaday world.

● (2207)

I want to go on a little further to say that there must be ideas and creative work for these people so long forgotten by the public purse which has poured out money on so many things that were far less deserving. Will the minister make a commitment to do something? Will she give some research funds to Bell Northern Research to make sure that the required research is done, and will she check with those in the United States? Will this invisible handicap then become one that will partially disappear?

In closing, I want to say to the parliamentary secretary for goodness sake let us stop putting things off and making excuses. Excuses only last so long. These are people who cannot speak for themselves or who cannot hear all that is going on. They are handicapped people that we all owe something to. As far as possible they try to work and do the things that they can do.

Mr. C. Douglas (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to respond to the hon. member this evening. As we all know, he at all times expresses sincere concern for the handicapped of this country and for those less fortunate than ourselves.

I can assure the hon. member that the minister herself feels the concern, as he does, for all handicapped, whether they are

handicapped by loss of hearing, loss of sight or by other handicaps. However, the solution is not as simple as we would like it to be.

I will deal specifically with the hon. member's concern about the captioning and use of sign language in television broadcasting. As he may or may not know, even in the use of sign language we have not as yet been able to come up with a universal type of sign language that can be used from coast to coast across Canada.

As hon. members probably know, sign language came to this country from France possibly about 100 years ago. Since then it has been developed in individual areas in the country to the point where we have a break-up of dialects even in the hand signals or in the sign language used on television. This, of course, presents a problem when we speak about a national broadcast designed to go into homes right across Canada and the United States. The mandate of the Minister of Communications (Mrs. Sauvé) is such that she cannot compel the networks, to use this system. In particular this applies to the private networks and the CBC, because the CBC does not fall under the umbrella of the Minister of Communications as far as programming is concerned. She must cajole and try to persuade them. Her mandate falls into the area where she can permit the use of this system but not compel it, as the hon. member knows. She would be pleased to permit this type of broadcasting right across the country.

However, we have learned that there are problems arising in the United States with the private networks which have expressed some concern. There are two types of captioning. One is the use of the sign language itself in the corner of the picture and the other is the proposed use of line 21 for captioning, either open or closed captioning, in the television screen.

● (2212)

One problem with captioning is that they found in limited use in the United States, primarily at the present time by the Public Broadcasting System, that the actual captioning of a broadcast, for example a news program or an hour long program, could involve the work of people from ten to 30 times as long as the actual presentation of the broadcast in order to put it on the air.

Mr. Rynard: How about the decoder?

Mr. Douglas (Bruce-Grey): One has been developed at present at a cost, of, I believe, \$2,000. There is still work going on with regard to the decoder. Some aspect has been looked at with cable television which would provide a special channel for the use of the decoder.

A final remark, if I may. The hon. member raised the subject of deductions. I hope he will address that at a later time to either the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) or the Minister of National Revenue in order to get an answer on this specific question.