

Interim Supply

only reason government got into broadcasting in the first place, other than for the purposes of supervision, was because it was not economical to have a privately owned network across Canada.

Mr. Moreau: Mr. Chairman, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson): Certainly.

Mr. Moreau: I wonder whether the policy of selling the C.B.C. to private interests is a policy that his party is advocating.

Mr. Starr: He did not say that at all.

Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson): What I said had nothing to do with the policy of this party. I am giving my views with regard to a subject with which I have been very deeply concerned for a number of years.

Mr. Woolliams: As a taxpayer.

Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson): As a taxpayer, as my hon. friend says, and also as someone who has been involved with the medical care of patients. I believe that television is a force the potency of which has not even been reckoned with as yet. I believe it should certainly be regulated and supervised, but I see no reason whatever why government should continue to operate studios and produce programs, etc., other than in the national interest; and, as I say, we have such an organ in the national film board, which is already set up specifically to produce films which interpret Canada to Canadians. As I said previously, they are now spending money to produce these films for television. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we have the national film board doing it on the one hand, and we have the C.B.C. doing it on the other. The only difference is that the national film board has not yet found out how to get enough money and they are operating on a very minor level at the moment. I am not suggesting they should be given a larger budget; all I am suggesting is that we should not leave all these things to the C.B.C. I am not saying we are going to sell the C.B.C. I say, let us sell their properties and their franchises in the major areas.

Mr. Moreau: Mr. Chairman, would the hon. member not agree that this is virtually disbanding the C.B.C.?

Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson): Not at all. The C.B.C. was set up, as I have already said, because it was not economically feasible to have a private network in Canada. Govern-

ment has no business in soap operas; that is not the role of government, in my opinion.

Mr. Woolliams: It may be for the Grits, though.

Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson): It may be. But we have to take a really close look at this matter. If we let it go any longer we are going to be lost to this creeping bureaucracy and they will have so much power that we will not be able to do anything about it. We must start looking at the situation now and see that we have a change from the basic policy that has been propagated by one royal commission or inquiry after another. This basic policy is that we must have a public broadcasting system.

We must have supervision of broadcasting in Canada. I agree that there are types of films which are educational and which, using the words of the Canada Year Book, interpret Canada to Canadians. We need this kind of film still; but they could be made available through private broadcasting. We could do more in regard to providing communication to some of our more remote areas. As the hon. member for Athabasca suggested, when we cease to build these edifices in Toronto and Montreal perhaps we will be able to take modern communications into the hinterlands. The cost of television has of course changed very considerably from 1957 to the present time, and will change more as time goes on. As these methods of communication become more common and we have more scientific developments, we will of course have more efficiency and more economy in setting up a television network.

We have all seen what has happened in this industry. The first network was set up with coaxial cable, and so on; then along came microwave and this brought down the cost of network operations. Further developments will probably bring down the cost of network operations to an even greater degree in the future. We now have jet transport, which means it is only a matter of three or four hours to travel from east to west. All these things have changed the entire concept of this industry, even the 1957 concept of the Fowler royal commission. In their report they say that the overwhelming weight of evidence submitted to them compelled them to report that Canadians wished to have a Canadian broadcasting system. The report does not say "a public broadcasting system". We of course want to keep broadcasting as much Canadian as we possibly can; we want to develop the arts with Canadian personnel. All I am sug-