

Broadcasting

with the somewhat thorny subject of comment on the publicly owned broadcasting system. At the first meeting of the broadcasting committee I think we were successful in persuading the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to change its previous policy and to take the step of appointing a full time man in Ottawa. We who have watched Mr. Norman DePoe on his television broadcasts know that an outstanding and impartial choice is made. He praises or damns without partiality at all. I hope the C.B.C. will give more thought—this can be examined by the broadcasting committee—to the appointment of similar commentators elsewhere. I believe this is the practice of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and it is something the C.B.C. could usefully study for Canada and give the broadcasting committee their opinions, pro and con.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think that the committee might—I am not so sure about this point—study the costs of microwave transmissions in Canada with relationship to the second network problem. This may be an unfair thing to ask of the committee in the light of the fact the C.B.C., in maintaining its competitive position, might wish to keep this information confidential. If they do, then I would not favour public exposure of it as it might hurt their competitive position. However, there is this massive and expensive system, and I feel something could be worked out so that the public corporation and private stations might use it, each bearing a fair and proper share of the costs. These points and others I feel should be developed in the committee. I hope I am lucky enough to be a member of that committee because it is a very enjoyable one.

Mr. H. M. Batten (Humber-St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to delay the passage of this resolution, but I should like to say one or two words. I believe that in a large country like Canada broadcasting in all its forms is very important. When we consider the impact and the influence of broadcasting in Canada and also the amount of money which the federal government now spends on all forms of broadcasting, we come to the realization that broadcasting is a very important operation in our country and one deserving the attention which a parliamentary committee can give. It is for this reason, sir, I would support the establishment of this committee.

I know that in this committee there will be a good deal of talk about programs, the type of program and the timing of programs. I should like to make some comments on these subjects, too, but I am not going to do so at this moment. I would think the main

[Mr. McCleave.]

purpose of the committee would be to improve, where possible, the reception in all parts of Canada. If broadcasting is going to be improved—I am including in “broadcasting” radio and television—then it must not only be improved where programs are being received but provision must be made for the reception of programs where no programs are now being received. I would hope that when the committee meets it will not only give consideration to the programs that are received in the various centres all across Canada but will give some consideration to the possibility of providing both radio and television service to those areas which are not now served.

I should like to give one or two examples, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to go into detail as this is not the place to do so. However, I should like to mention one or two points that have a relationship to my own constituency in order to explain the point I am trying to make. On a number of occasions I have brought up the question of the radio station at Corner Brook, CBY. The Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Nowlan) will recall the fact that I have referred to this question on a number of occasions. At that time I wanted this radio station to increase its power, change the ground pattern or change the frequency, so that the people who have received this radio station for a number of years, even before Newfoundland came into confederation and who are not now receiving it because of interference from CHEY, Newcastle, which operates on the same frequency, could receive it again. Apparently it was impossible to get this done.

A new station was licensed within the last two or three months, and that station is now covering the whole area which CBY was not willing to serve. Now after the new station is providing the service which these people require the C.B.C. decides that they are going to increase the power. Those are things of the type that I think the committee should consider if they are going to talk about improving radio and television services in areas where they are not received.

I am thinking of another case. We have had within the last two years or so a new television station at Corner Brook. May I say to the minister now that it is doing an excellent job. The only difficulty is that the station has a radius of only about 17 miles. Then 30 miles away from that city of Corner Brook is the large town of Deer Lake—that is to say, large by Newfoundland standards—one of 5,000 people who are not able to receive this station. They are getting no television reception at all.