

which is not subject to the control of this parliament and about which we can obtain no information through this parliament. I suggest to the minister that he should seriously consider increasing the number of inspectors, even though the cost must come out of the public treasury of this country; or that if he is going to increase radio licence fees, at least he divert that increase towards seeing that people get better reception, instead of handing the money over to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Item agreed to.

Issue of radio receiving licences (Transport department only), \$113,420.

Mr. LAWSON: Although the stoical attitude of the minister with respect to the difficulties of the public may be conducive to avoiding further discussion, I should like to ask the minister some questions respecting this item. In reply to a question which I asked in the house a few days ago I received the information that during the calendar year 1937 the total amount of money received by the department from the collection of radio licence fees, after the deduction of commissions to collectors or whatever they may be, amounted to \$1,925,014.16 net. Then I find that including a part of that period, namely, from April 1, 1937, to March 2, 1938, the department paid over to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation \$1,870,000, or \$55,014.61 less than they had collected. I would ask whether any percentage of the net amount received from the collections is deducted from the payments to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, if so, what percentage, or is the corporation merely granted amounts from time to time without relation to the sum collected?

Mr. HOWE: My hon. friend framed his question on the order paper in a way that did not give an exact indication of what he was trying to get at.

Mr. LAWSON: If the minister will permit, I deliberately framed my question so that I might be given either the calendar year or the fiscal year, because I did not know which way the department kept the statistics.

Mr. HOWE: Only in the third question.

Mr. LAWSON: But they answered by giving the fiscal year as against the calendar year.

Mr. HOWE: As I remember, the third question was framed to cover either the fiscal year or the calendar year.

Mr. LAWSON: Right. I left the choice to you.

Mr. HOWE: We have nothing to conceal in that particular. I should like to make the matter as clear as I can. The funds are collected on behalf of the broadcasting corporation by the Department of Transport. The corporation is a self-contained body, over which the Department of Transport has absolutely no control. As minister my only relation to the corporation is that if the government wishes to communicate with it, I am the channel through which that communication is made, and if the broadcasting corporation wishes to communicate with the government, it does so through myself. Parliament set up a body, in the form of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, independent of the government. I have, however, one check on the corporation; that is I can take my own time in paying over the money we collect, and I exercise that power to make sure that the corporation lives within its means. Each month the corporation submits to me a budget for its requirements, and on the basis of that budget, which we check, we pay over the funds as we collect them from the broadcasting receiving licences. We do not always pay over the whole amount immediately; in fact, last year we did not pay over all the fees we collected, for the reason, I believe, that the broadcasting corporation had certain outstanding accounts which were in dispute and which they were not prepared to release within the year. However, all the funds we collect are earmarked for the broadcasting corporation, and some time at or about the end of the fiscal year they have been paid all the expenses of that year.

Mr. LAWSON: In full?

Mr. HOWE: Less the cost of collection. That cost divides itself into two parts. In the first place we pay commissions to collectors, a maximum of twenty-five cents and a minimum of five cents per licence. Perhaps I can give my hon. friend some information—

Mr. LAWSON: No; I am interested only in what the department receives net, and as against that, in the calendar year, how much the department pays to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr. HOWE: Commissions to collectors average about sixteen cents per licence. In addition to that there is the head office expense of the branch which does this collecting. Last year it was about \$103,000; this year it will be \$113,420. That also is deducted