

*Supply—Transport*

**Mr. Harris:** I rise on a point of order. I saw my hon. friend looking at the clock. If he has other remarks to make, I was going to ask that the committee rise and report progress and ask leave to sit again later this day, so that an announcement be made.

Progress reported.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1955-56**

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 1956, was presented by Hon. W. E. Harris (Minister of Finance), read by Mr. Deputy Speaker to the house, and referred to the committee of supply.

**SUPPLY**

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Robinson (Simcoe East) in the chair.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

A—Department—

435. Departmental administration, \$1,777,100.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

**AFTER RECESS**

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

**Mr. Barnett:** Mr. Chairman, when the committee rose at one o'clock I was about to enter on a discussion of another topic related to the estimates of the Minister of Transport and having to do with the field of telecommunications. I should like to put before the committee the results of certain discussions I have had in my constituency on this matter with particular reference to the manner in which the increasing use of various forms of radio communication is of concern to the fishermen. One of the matters that have been concerning the fishermen is the increasing congestion of the radio frequencies which have been assigned for their use, particularly the one known in British Columbia as the fishermen's band, 2318.

I think it is fair to say that as a result of my discussions I am led to believe that the fishermen themselves would welcome the exercise in some way of a greater measure of control over the use of that band than perhaps has been the case up to the present time. I refer, of course, to some of the rather unnecessary conversations that have been going out over the air waves in the coastal waters of British Columbia. However, there are some particular points I should like to

have the minister note at this time and perhaps at some point in the discussion of his estimates he might give us some indication of just what his department has in mind in this field.

Some of the fishermen, particularly those operating the smaller vessels such as the trollers and the gillnetters, object to the fact that some of the larger vessels employ quite high-powered sets and that they use these sets in the course of directing their seining operations with the result that in the immediate area those who have lower-powered sets find themselves obliterated from the air. One suggestion put forward to me by quite a number of fishermen is that if those who have high-powered sets installed require radio communication for purely local operations they should be required to instal what you might call some sort of walkie-talkie radio which would not cause the interference that is being occasioned at the present time.

Another complaint that many of the fishermen have brought to my attention is that under the present regulations those with low-powered sets are being assigned only the fishermen's band and the emergency band and that even though they are licensed to operate only on those frequencies they are still required to pay a \$50 telephone deposit in addition to the \$10 licence fee. They feel that in this case they are being charged for something which they are not entitled to use as a result of the limited number of bands on which they can use their sets.

There has been a good deal of dissatisfaction in the last year or two with respect to the uncertainty that has existed as to just what the licensing policy of the department is going to be. In particular, a number of those who have been handling the distribution of this equipment feel that they have been put in the position of selling goods with regard to which it was discovered later that they were not allowed to carry out the undertaking they gave to the buyer at the time of the sale. In other words, they sold sets which were capable of operating on a number of bands and discovered later that licences were only going to be issued for the two frequencies to which I referred a moment ago. The result is that they have had dissatisfied customers. I hope that this situation will be straightened out so that the dealers and the buyers of the equipment will not feel they have been placed in a compromising position.

There is another point I should like to mention while I am on this subject. A number of fishermen have told me that they are going to be required to take written examinations as operators of these sets. Their