

Supply—Secretary of State

Commons committee has finished its discussions. I suggest it is a matter on which some decision has to be made shortly, and I should like to hear from the minister on this point.

Miss LaMarsh: I will be making some reference to the point when we come to the C.B.C. At the moment the item before the committee concerns the Board of Broadcast Governors.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Chairman, I should like, while we are studying Secretary of State estimates, to draw the attention of the minister to a problem about which she is aware. Ever since 1962, we have repeatedly pointed out to the government and the Secretary of State the problem which exists in my riding, the Chapleau riding, with regard to broadcasting and television in the cities of Chibougamau and Chapais.

At the present time, radio and television networks cover practically the whole country; over 90 per cent of all Canadians have access to these services, but there are still some centres, cities in Canada, where there is no television and radio.

That may not be exactly the case for Chibougamau and Chapais, for the citizens of these two municipalities do have television, thanks to a cable and microwave system.

These people are served, but they must pay a fortune to get television signals, while the organizations of both these municipalities have already, on several occasions, submitted briefs and resolutions to the Department of the Secretary of State and to the government with a view to obtaining the same radio and television service as every other Canadian region.

I have here the last of the resolutions submitted recently to the Department of the Secretary of State asking that these services be provided without charge, as they are in every other part of Canada.

This brief, submitted by the Chamber of Commerce of Chibougamau was endorsed by the local public bodies, namely the municipal corporations of Chibougamau and Chapais, the Chambers of Commerce, the Labour Unions and the Owners' League, in short, the whole population of these two cities.

The brief submitted recently read as follows:

Whereas, on several occasions, requests were made to the C.B.C. and to the Department of Transport to get free television in the region of Chibougamau-Chapais, and that such requests never produced anything;

[Mr. Prittie.]

Whereas the cities of Chibougamau and Chapais are remote cities which pay practically the highest taxes because of their geographic location;

Whereas the cost of living in our region for gas, groceries, etc., is higher than elsewhere;

There is no doubt that, in a region very remote from other centres, the transportation costs increase, thus lowering considerably the purchasing power.

I now resume reading the resolution:

Whereas most salaries in Chibougamau and Chapais come from the mining industry and are therefore higher than in other regions, they bring more money into the public treasury;

Whereas we are not asking for more than the others around us are getting but that we are asking for at least what we are entitled to;

Whereas there are approximately 15,000 people in Chibougamau-Chapais and that we are happy to say that our region does not live off the government, the spectre of unemployment does not exist in our part of the province;

It is quite true; as soon as someone becomes unemployed, the cost of living is so high that he cannot stay long and has to leave.

I continue:

Whereas television in a Canadian home is no longer a luxury but just a means of information, entertainment, culture, etc. and that it becomes a necessity and a right which is ours as it is everywhere else in Canada, and without charge;

Whereas in the larger centres colour television will soon be available to all and that it should at least be given in black and white in our region;

I wish to point out to you, sir, and to the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh) that the people of Chibougamau and Chapais are not asking to stop preparations to give colour television to the other regions but at least that television in black and white be given to them. They are not asking for what belongs to others but only for what belongs to them.

● (8:00 p.m.)

I go on:

Whereas, at present, some people can afford black and white television with poorer results than elsewhere and by paying the following prohibitive prices:

First, a television set costs more than elsewhere, secondly, the sizeable sum of \$200 must be paid for the connection with the community antenna and then, a fee of \$7 a month of \$84 a year, plus a 6 per cent provincial tax that other areas do not have to pay;

And they can only get one channel. But if they do not pay that amount, they are without any television at all.

Whereas the only benefit in living in an area such as ours is that we can earn our daily bread, while the handicaps are many such as:

1. Gravel roads that easily wreck a car within the first 30,000 miles.