

Supply—Secretary of State

supplementary to the P.F.A.A. payments, and I think indicates I trust to the satisfaction of the hon. members for Peace River and Medicine Hat the soundness of the government's policy not to supplement P.F.A.A. payments in the three areas requested by the province of Alberta. This would in fact have been discriminatory, as this request now clearly indicates.

Mr. Schreyer: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. The minister made reference to a government policy in respect of feed grain. Does the government have any policy in respect of the immediate crisis which is being faced?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This appears to be a good time at which to advise the house that the question period now is completed.

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Batten in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
1. Departmental administration, \$481,600.

The Chairman: Shall vote No. 1 carry?

Mr. Starr: Before vote No. 1 carries, Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the minister has anything further to say with regard to some of the questions which have been asked, or which have been given to her in written form?

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, I received today questions from each of two hon. members opposite. One is from the hon. member for Churchill, who asks me to agree to provide a special sum of money during this session to allow the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to complete its job of providing extended service, presumably in his own constituency. I thought last evening, in response to his remarks and those of others, I had made it very clear that while I was in sympathy with the request, the matter was being considered now by a cabinet committee, which the Prime Minister announced and which he chairs, and that this is a part of general policy on broadcasting.

I think my hon. friend realizes that, although it is the responsibility of the Secretary of State to be a conduit pipe, it is not my place to tell the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation where they should extend service. As a government it is our responsibility to draw up plans in respect of how much

[Mr. Greene.]

money we will ask parliament to vote, depending on the request put to us by the C.B.C.

I think my hon. friend also will realize that I cannot give him the assurance he wishes, particularly in respect of the estimates before this committee, the spending of which will be completed in about two weeks' time. He had some figures, which I now have had an opportunity to check, concerning the per-household cost for provision of service, of something in the order of \$4 or \$5. I should like to correct him, because I think if he checks he will realize that he made a slip. The \$4 or \$5 is per capita, and the per household figure on which we presently are working is \$20.

I am informed by the corporation that they hope, even under present financing, they will be able to work up to a figure of something like \$10 per capita in the next few years. If the government is able to recommend an accelerated policy and parliament agrees, that figure will rise much more sharply.

I also was asked by the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek that I give an undertaking to the effect that some money would be forthcoming to provide service by the C.B.C. in his constituency. I think it is quite obvious that constitutionally I cannot provide such an assurance. Last evening, in stating the government's position, I went further than any previous minister responsible for the C.B.C. ever has done before. I indicated, notwithstanding the fact that some of the hon. member's constituents feel aggrieved, as was shown in the return tabled February 7, the cost per capita today for Canadians is only .03 cents for radio and .09 cents for television. However, this still is a service which, when extended in certain areas, becomes extraordinarily expensive.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure my hon. friend that he will have service on such and such a date, or the year after, but I cannot do that. Also I am informed I was wrong in my recollection last night when, referring to the Fowler Report, I said our service now extends to 92 per cent of our homes for television and 96 per cent for radio. The figures properly should be 94 and 98. There are some people in Canada to whom we are not going to be able to bring television, partly because they are so scattered, partly because the cost per capita is extremely high, and partly because there is no way under present technology to extend the service there.