

Supply—C.B.C.

body, because I am sure the private operators in this country are virtually getting away with murder in so far as the broadcasting regulations are concerned. I am convinced that they do not want an independent regulatory body. All they want is their foot in the door. I am convinced that if we had an independent regulatory body to administer the broadcasting regulations in this country they would find themselves restricted a great deal more in their operations than they have been under the supervision and regulations of the C.B.C. as they are carried out at the present time.

They talk about competition. They go to the people—and this is something that I think is false—and they ask, “Are you in favour of the C.B.C. being judge, jury and competitor with the private stations?” Naturally people are very much aware of freedom in this country. Their immediate reaction is, “Yes, we would like to see an independent body. We do not like to see the C.B.C., this vast corporation, in direct competition with a small independent broadcasting company.” But that is false because that kind of proposition is based on the premise that there are two distinct broadcasting organizations in this country. That is not true. We have in this country the C.B.C., and in conjunction with the C.B.C. we have the private broadcasting stations augmenting the services of the C.B.C. and working in co-operation with the C.B.C. In effect we have one broadcasting organization in this country. To admit that the corporation provides the private operators with a great measure of the service free of charge, and then to turn around and say that the private broadcasters are competing with the C.B.C. is an absolutely false statement.

I do not know of any business in this country that is in a more lucrative position than the private broadcasters. They are doing very well. I happen to know a few in my area, and I happen to know that they are in a very lucrative business. But I think I can understand that they see where the business can become even more lucrative. A few moments ago the hon. member for Prince Albert posed the question, why is the station CBK at Watrous not making a profit?

I would suggest to the hon. member for Prince Albert that if the private broadcasters in this country would accept some of the responsibility for building television and broadcasting facilities and better programs, the C.B.C. possibly could make a profit in a good many of the stations they are operating in this country. But the C.B.C. today are building across this country radio and television broadcasting facilities, and certainly they are not going to be in any position to show

a profit for some time. But I maintain that if the private broadcasters in this country would do some of the things they are promising they are going to do if they have the field to themselves, by way of providing different programs and building facilities for broadcasting in this country, possibly the C.B.C. would be relieved of a great deal of the economic strain to which it is subjected today. Hence, as far as I am concerned, many of these things do not seem to hold water.

I will agree that C.B.C. broadcasting in this country is costing the Canadian people a tremendous amount of money. But is there anybody in this country who is so naive as to think that he is going to get a comparable type of broadcasting for any less? Is there anybody in this country who is so naive that he thinks the private interests in this country are going to go out and produce television and sound broadcasting “for free”? No, Mr. Chairman; the people pay for everything in this country. Whether it comes from the C.B.C. or whether it comes because of the fact that you buy a can of baking powder or something else, you pay for everything you get in this country. It is a matter of how you pay for it.

Then I have heard the fantastic argument put forward that the poor suppliers of radio and television sets are paying the major shot for broadcasting in this country. I wonder whether there is anybody in this country who is so naive as to think that a man who sells a television set gives \$15 of his own money to support broadcasting in this country. No, Mr. Chairman; the person who buys that set pays for the broadcasting just as he is paying for the broadcasting now through the C.B.C. Anybody who tries to tell you anything different is just pulling your leg.

I should just like to say one further thing, Mr. Chairman. I do not think we can afford to turn over an important public utility to private interests, in particular the C.B.C. If we are going to try to maintain programs which have in them a great content of material that is important to Canadians, we can do so only through the C.B.C. Only those who stop to realize what is involved in television appreciate what is the situation. They know that Hollywood can put a program in the city of Toronto, can run that program for from 12 months to two years, and have a full house every night. But if you put on a television program that may cost as much as \$25,000 to produce, and you put it over the air waves once, you have “had it”; it is obsolete. If you put it over the air waves twice you will receive criticism. I am sure the members of the C.B.C. who are present will tell you about the criticism that is