

But while this is so, I hope the minister will not think I am detracting from my views as to the usefulness of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation or as to his own excellent administration, if I express strong disapproval of the increase in the radio licence fees. I believe I would not be adequately representing my constituency if I failed to do so.

I am hoping the minister's statement in answer to the hon. member for Comox-Alberni, to the effect that the government is giving consideration to some aspects of the matter may bring about an extension in some particulars. My objection is raised not only because of the increased cost—although that will be burdensome to many, not merely to those with batteryless sets but to farmers in constituencies like my own, and other people in the cities—but because by passing the act of two years ago parliament has committed itself to belief in a publicly owned chain of radio facilities. I endorse that principle, and believe it is in the best interests of Canada.

If that is to be the accepted principle, then I think we should pay for it in a proper way so as not to depopularize the institution itself. I suggest, with the greatest respect, that not only the increase in licence fees, but the method of collecting these fees, will in the long run tend, not only to impose an additional burden on the people but, more particularly, to discredit an institution which has thus far so well justified itself. It is an institution which may be used as one of the most effective instruments in keeping together the various sectional interests of the country which, at the present time, present such a picture of disunity.

Mr. HAMILTON: In certain areas of Canada, including my own constituency, radio owners do not get any reception from C.B.C. stations. In the Sault Ste. Marie area we pay a substantial sum in radio licence fees, and I am quite sure we would pay it willingly if we were getting the reception I believe we should get. The fact is, however, that we are getting nothing whatever from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The local station is not connected with the network, and the powerful Toronto station, CBL, does not reach Sault Ste. Marie with any degree of dependability. As a result we are paying a substantial sum and getting nothing whatever in return from the broadcasting corporation.

If the radio fee is to be increased, then I think it is fair to ask that at least arrangements be made whereby all parts of Canada may get, as nearly as possible, equal coverage. In those areas where they are able to get the

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the United States stations they will be getting something extra for the fifty cent increase; but as far as my constituency is concerned, the people will receive nothing extra for the extra fifty cents. The people there feel that they are being asked to pay \$2.50 to give other sections of Canada good coverage, while they get nothing themselves. I agree with the suggestion that battery sets should receive special consideration.

Mr. HOWE: Both the department and the corporation are aware of the situation at Sault Ste. Marie, and the purpose of the application for additional revenue is to remedy the situation there as well as in other parts of the country.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): I think the consensus of opinion throughout the country is that there should not be an increase in these licence fees. I understand that there was a surplus of \$128,000 last year, although this figure may be subject to correction. We have a very good system set up under the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and I want to commend the minister for the improvement in the service. However, if I were to ask for the return of all correspondence against this increase, I am sure it would take a staff of stenographers two or three weeks to prepare it. If the administration wants to get more money, I see no objection to its obtaining increased revenue through charges against the United States stations, which desire to broadcast in Canada for advertising purposes, and I think that would be a more advantageous way to obtain additional revenue than to add an additional burden to people already hard pressed for money.

I am not speaking on behalf of those able to pay this fifty cent increase; I speak for those in the rural areas, particularly in the dried out areas, to whom fifty cents is a tremendous amount of money. The radio is the only means of entertainment that these people have, and I do not think the licence fee should be increased. It would seem that this increase is being passed on to Canadian people while publishers are going to have just that much more money to put in their pockets. I am against the principle of obtaining increased revenue from increased fees. These revenues should come from the same source from which we are obtaining it now. If the radio corporation does as well next year as it did last year and still has \$128,000 to work on, then there should be no kick.

I am of the opinion that considerable pressure has been brought to bear by the