Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Your Honour will realize, I am sure, that if you had allowed the question, the minister would probably have said yes and that would have been the end of the exchange. But since Your Honour suggested that I might post it for a "late show," that gives me an opportunity to say a few more words about this matter and perhaps to get a more considered reply, which I understand will be given tonight on behalf of the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald).

I asked this question and I raise it tonight because I think the idea that has been suggested is a good one. It is not one of those things about which we are going to argue and fight, or man the barricades, but I hope it will be looked at seriously and sympathetically. It was brought to my attention a few days ago that Mr. Tom Knighton, President of the Ottawa Senior Citizens Council, wrote to Mr. Marcel Ouimet of the CBC on May 1 of this year making the very suggestion to which I have alluded, namely, that it might be a good idea if there could be a radio or television program planned and produced by senior citizens, and produced for senior citizens to enjoy.

The letter suggests that the problem of finding prime time does not arise because these people have lots of time, so these programs could be put on almost any time of the day. Time is one thing of which they have plenty. It is also suggested that the idea of a program for a special group is not new to the CBC. There are such programs now as "Indian Magazine," "The New Majority" and "Tween Set." These are three worthy examples of programs beamed to particular groups and produced by representatives of those particular groups. I like Mr. Knighton's letter very much. I like his suggestion contained in this sentence:

For many of us, to have lived a long time is to have lived fully and we have some important and colourful things to say.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Ouimet has also received a telegram from Mr. J. L. Lerette of Toronto, president of the United Senior Citizens of Ontario and also president of the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation of Canada. This telegram endorses the request made by the Ottawa Senior Citizens Council and I may say further that these communications were brought to my attention, with an indication of support, by an officer of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa and District.

No one would ever accuse me of wanting to substitute for old age pensioners something other than good and adequate pensions. But those of us who advocate better and higher pensions for senior citizens are also concerned about the quality of their life and the other things that might be done for these people. One of the ways to do things for people is to give them an opportunity to do things for themselves. So, Mr. Speaker, when this idea was brought to my attention I thought it was good enough to bring to the attention of Parliament, even in the question period. But I thank Your Honour again for making the suggestion that it might be dealt with in the more calm atmosphere of the adjournment debate, and I look forward to the answer of the President of the Privy Council. Let me say to him I am the last person to suggest that any directive should be given to the CBC as to what kind of programming it should engage in, but I think it would be appropriate if word were to be sent to the CBC to the effect that in Parliament there is interest in what I regard as this very excellent idea.

● (10:20 p.m.)

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier), I can advise that word has indeed been received by the CBC on this question. I am advised by the CBC that the request for at least one program on radio and television, planned by and for senior citizens, has been received from the Ottawa Citizens Council and it will be considered by senior program officers later this month.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.