

Motions for Papers

placed before the house, and this is the case in respect of the estimates of other departments as well, we are asked to push them through. I think we are entitled to this information and I support the motion of the hon. member for York-Humber. I hope other hon. members will also support this motion. The disclosure of such information will not damage the C.B.C., although it might embarrass those people who authorize the payment of these excessive amounts.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy LeBlanc (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, under a democratic system of government such as ours, I feel that members of parliament should be able to obtain all the necessary papers for their information, so as to be in a position to play their role properly as legislators and representatives of the people. This is a general rule.

At the point where we resume this debate, I deem it necessary, even though the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt) concluded his speech started in early March, to restate the problem, to set the situation in its true light, to put forward the present policy of the government and of the C.B.C. and to comment that policy.

Last January, the member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan) moved the following motion:

That an order of the house do issue for a copy of all correspondence, telegrams or other documents, dated since January 1, 1961, exchanged between the Secretary of State or any agency or department of the government of Canada relating to payments made to John T. Saywell and/or John C. Ricker by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and a list setting out in detail each such payment to each such person.

On February 1 last, the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh), minister responsible for the C.B.C. to the government and parliament, in her answer to the hon. member for York-Humber, said that there was no correspondence between the Department of the Secretary of State or any other agency or department of the government with respect to that matter, and asked him to withdraw his motion.

The hon. member for York-Humber asked that the matter be transferred for debate, adding that he had asked not only for the tabling of correspondence and telegrams but also other papers.

For my part, I assume that the Secretary of State, in saying that there was no correspondence, meant also that there were no telegrams or other papers. Had there been telegrams or

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

other papers, I am of the opinion, knowing her frankness and integrity, that she would have admitted it simply, specifying, if necessary, the reasons of her refusal to table them.

• (6:10 p.m.)

On the other hand, if the services of Messrs. Saywell and Riker were retained by the C.B.C. either for talks or news commentaries or historical research, there must be somewhere in the C.B.C. files correspondence, telegrams or at least papers such as contracts, agreements or the like on fees or honorarium, etc.

However, going back to the text of the motion, I wonder if the member for York-Humber was explicit enough under the circumstances. Especially in view of the facts that he will mention in the course of the debate, and his numerous experiences to which he will allude:

In the motion, he mentions:

—the Secretary of State or any agency or department of the government of Canada—

Why did the hon. member not mention also the C.B.C. as possible holder of the papers he was interested in?

Perhaps the minister's answer would then have been quite different. Perhaps also he would have had an answer along the lines of the words from the C.B.C. which he quoted in the debate. Here are those words:

We don't give out information. Such information is not in the public interest. Such information is not divulged to parliament.

These personal comments which came to my mind, first after the response of the hon. member for York-Humber to the minister's answer, give a great deal of support to my remarks at this point.

Mr. Speaker, the debate requested by the mover of this motion began last March 9. Contributions have been made by the hon. member for York-Humber, the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) and the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt), who concluded his remarks a few moments ago.

When re-reading the mover's speech, I note that, right at the beginning, he answers the question I had asked myself, namely: Why did he not mention the C.B.C. in the text of his motion?

In fact, he said and I quote:

I would not have had the temerity to move a motion asking for information from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation having had many years' experience of requesting information, which requests have been met with the bland answer: "We don't give out information. Such information