

Supply—Transport

out also about the ships under the minister's own department. After all, the member of a crew of a government ship is probably a person with a family, a wife and children, and his life is as valuable as the life of a person who is sailing on a ship owned by the Canadian Pacific or some other private company, and these rules are designed primarily to preserve life at sea. There is no reason why government ships should not be compelled to comply in full with all such provisions.

Another point relates to the allotment of channels; for example, for broadcasting and for television. There seems to be some difficulty in that regard. The Radio Act defines a radio station broadly enough to include a broadcasting station and a television station. It gives the Minister of Transport power to make regulations with respect to the operation of these stations. I believe it is wide enough to permit the allotting of channels. In fact, it provides wide supervision. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, however, under another act, is also given certain power and, mind you, it is supposed to deal with the Minister of Transport in some way or another in connection with these matters, but I have heard that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has now built itself up into the position where it considers that it has the supreme authority in these questions and that it should make the decisions while the Minister of Transport and his officials are supposed to run along and do what they are told. There again I hope I am wrong; the minister has his own officials qualified for this work; the law says they are to be the final authority in this field and I hope they are not allowing themselves to be supplanted by this crown corporation.

Finally, I would ask the minister to explain to the committee in detail the part that the Department of Transport is playing in connection with the installation and operation of the early warning lines. He mentioned something about it today but not sufficient to give us any real information. I think he said they had some helicopters working in connection with the D.E.W. line and something was also being done in connection with the mid-Canada line.

Mr. Marler: Not helicopters.

Mr. Green: In the latter case it was not helicopters. I believe the committee should know just how the Department of Transport fits into this picture. Here again very little information is available to hon. members of this house. I would think that the Department of Transport has quite an extensive field, because these lines involve communications.

For example, the department has charge of the northwest communications service into the Yukon and I believe also up the Mackenzie river and into other parts of northern Canada. I would think the department would have wide powers in connection with the mid-Canada and the distant early warning lines. We would like to know just what the situation is in that regard.

These are the questions which I place before the minister today and which I hope he will be able to deal with when he makes his reply on this item.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, like the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra I was interested in following the minister's explanation of the activities of his department. I think most of us realize that the activities of the minister's department are very broad, certainly too broad for any hon. member to attempt to survey in any completeness in one discussion. However, I think the minister's hope that his estimates will be speedily considered does not recognize the fact that the activities of his department vitally affect the daily lives of a large number of Canadians, perhaps in the kind of world in which we now live to a much greater extent than most of them realize. For that reason I believe that a certain amount of discussion of the activities of this department could be carried on profitably by hon. members.

We hear much more about the activities of other departments, for example the Department of National Health and Welfare, which receives a lot of consideration in this house. But I have been thinking that the activities of the Department of Transport affect almost as intimately the lives and welfare of almost as many Canadians. I have been wondering whether we should not classify this department in the civilian world with what is known in another field as the silent service. So much of what is done is under the surface and most of us are not aware of just how far the activities of the department extend in taking care of us whether we are travelling by land, sea or air, whether we are listening to our radios or watching our televisions, or whether we are doing any one of a large number of things.

I was rather interested in the reference made by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra to the field of jurisdiction affecting Trans-Canada Air Lines. I am inclined to agree with the hon. member's suggestion, and this thought has crossed my mind on a number of occasions since I have been in this house, that this particular field of transportation should be under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transport rather than the Minister of Trade and Commerce.