

Mr. EDWARDS: Would the minister outline the procedure when the owner of a radio is taken to court for not paying his fees? He is notified twice, I understand. Does the department take part in the prosecution? I understand a summons, or some sort of certificate, is endorsed by the head of the department, or his deputy.

Mr. HOWE: After it has been decided to prosecute, the case is reviewed at head office. If it seems to be a case which should be prosecuted, I sign the authority, and the Department of Transport attends to the prosecution.

Mr. EDWARDS: That was the point I wanted to have cleared up. I made inquiry at the police court of my home city, and that was the information I received. I had not known the situation prior to that time. I now understand that each case is reviewed.

Mr. HOWE: Yes.

Mr. BETTS: I cannot applaud the suggestion that the assessor be given the job of collecting radio licence fees. They are already employed; in these hard times they have fairly good jobs. I believe this is a function which could be carried out admirably by returned soldiers. They are a particularly dependable class, and many of them are in great need. The Department of Pensions and National Health has set up a veterans' assistance commission, of which honorary committees have been set up in the larger centres to keep in touch with the returned men. They have lists of unemployed veterans, their qualifications and capabilities, and I would say that if the government really is desirous of ameliorating the situation of the returned man, as it contended it was during the last campaign, and since, this is a splendid opportunity for the Minister of Transport to cooperate with the Minister of Pensions and National Health, so that this work might be given to returned soldiers.

Mr. HOWE: I believe practically all collectors are returned soldiers. May I point out, however, that the work does not present a very encouraging outlook for a returned soldier, because there is not much pay connected with it. The fee is small, and no man could possibly make a living at the work. Collecting licence fees at twenty-five cents per licence is not a career. However, I believe that the veteran with a small pension is the man who is doing the work in Canada.

Mr. NEILL: I understood the minister to say that the order in council had gone through increasing the fee to \$2.50. I am not going to kick at that, although it would

[Mr. Howe.]

no doubt be popular to do so. But we did get the new station at Vancouver, which has been of great benefit to us in British Columbia.

I should like to put in a strong plea on behalf of the people in the country districts—not the larger cities. It costs a great deal to run a radio with batteries. A thousand hour battery, which runs for only about eight hundred hours, costs about \$25. It is quite different from the man in the town who connects his radio to an electrical plant, and scarcely notices the cost.

If a man can afford to pay for two radios, he should have two licences, just as he would if he had two automobiles. People who are remote from moving picture theatres and who do not live near a village or town, find that the radio is of great importance to them. One way to help them would be to give them consideration in the matter of the fee. If the minister increases the fee, and adds to it the already heavy tax imposed on the man who has to use batteries in his radio, he is making the cost prohibitive. If the minister cannot reduce the fee, I would ask that at least he would not raise it in respect of those who use batteries. This would be a sort of means test, because if a man has a battery set, it would mean either that he is a poor man in a town, and uses coal oil, or that he is in the country, where there is no electricity.

Mr. HOWE: The government is giving serious consideration to differentiating with respect to battery sets in areas where continuous current is not available. I believe there will be an announcement on that shortly.

Mr. HEAPS: I should like to refer to the increased revenue the department expects to receive from the additional fifty cents in licence fees. I believe the minister said he expected an increase of over \$600,000 as a result of the added amount. May I suggest that he take a portion of that money, at least ten per cent of it, and use it in an attempt to do away with radio interference. As has been pointed out by the minister, the amount now spent in that connection is taken out of the consolidated revenue fund. I should think it would be only right and proper if the increased amount were used to improve radio reception.

Mr. MARTIN: No one who has followed the development of radio in Canada during the past year and a half can resist the conclusion that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has indeed done an excellent job. While the minister is not actually in charge of its operation, he is likewise deserving of sincere commendation.