

Adjournment Debate

I want to add something else which is even more profound. I come back again to the hon. member for Rimouski. Let us take one industry that is unprotected and not under these controls. I refer to agriculture. When the figures come out next week for the year 1976, agriculture will show a decline in real income of 25 per cent. There is talk about labour income going up 10 per cent, how other things are going up at a certain rate, how prices are going up, but farming was down 25 per cent for the year 1976.

I support what the hon. member for Rimouski said. This is the human problem that everyone forgets. On the basis of present trends of gross cash receipts, farm income in 1977 will show a further decline of 20 per cent. Taking the two years together, you get a total real income decline in one of the most important segments of our economy of about 40 per cent in two years. How can they talk about rough justice in general economic tones in this House when one large segment of our people has a decline in income in two years, under these so-called price and wage controls, of 40 per cent in real income?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION—DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICE TO CHURCHILL BY RADIO STATION CHFC— CORPORATION POLICY

Mr. Cecil Smith (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon following up my question of May 13 concerning the discontinuation of service to Churchill by radio station CHFC and the corporation policy of the CBC.

I want to point out today the CBC is running rough-shod over people in isolated parts of Canada. Churchill, Manitoba, is an isolated community located on Hudson Bay. It is serviced by air and rail and, in the summer, by ship. It is a very important seaport.

At the present time the community of Churchill has a population of 1,600. They had the privilege of having a radio station for 25 years. That CBC station was installed so that that community would have some form of media. They were not able to receive other stations that were transmitting in Manitoba.

When the radio station was built 25 years ago, Churchill had an approximate population of 4,500 people. That was because the Department of Public Works operated an armed services camp there. That camp has now been phased out.

[Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain).]

With the complete phasing out of that operation, it only left the CBC radio station CHFC.

• (1800)

Many people in Churchill were wondering when the CBC would move its facilities into the town of Churchill where the federal and provincial governments had just constructed an \$11 million recreational complex known as the Churchill Complex. Nothing came to a head until, talking to the CBC in the early part of May, I found out they were planning to phase out CHFC in Churchill. The community of Churchill was not aware of this plan. People in that corporation who are supposed to be media experts capable of providing information to Canadians in all parts of the country, had failed to consult the local media, the mayor, officials of the local government district, or any of the organizations in Churchill.

Once I found out about it I got in touch with the radio station in Churchill. The manager was not in at the time I called but I did talk to one of the announcers and asked him whether he realized that the station was to be phased out in September. She said; "You are crazy!" However, I was able to make her eat those words a day or so later because a CBC representative called me and set up a community meeting in Churchill on May 12. Approximately 110 people came to that meeting, and it almost ended in a riot for the simple reason that the CBC had made an arbitrary decision to phase out CHFC in Churchill, thus leaving the community with no in-community radio broadcasting station, though they had been accustomed to such a service for 25 years.

Over the next couple of weeks local organizations and individuals sent briefs to the CBC on the subject. Briefs were sent from the local government district, the Manitoba Metis Association, from the Active Youth of Churchill, from the Churchill Volunteer Fire Department, from the Northern Resource Development Centre, by the Churchill Health Centre, by the Churchill Northern Studies Centre, and by individuals such as Lorraine H. Ingebrigtsen and Ollie Romanow. They sought a hearing from the CRTC and found out that a hearing had been arranged, either by CRTC or by the CBC, for June 22 in, of all places, Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, it was impossible for people to come all the way from Churchill to present briefs to the CBC at that time. However, the CRTC has now decided to hold the hearing in Winnipeg on December 13.

I just cannot understand why the CBC would be phasing out an English radio production facility in Churchill, Manitoba, when at the same time it seems to be gearing up for a program called the accelerated coverage plan to go right across Canada at a cost of some \$150 million. There just is no point in phasing out a radio station which has served the community of Churchill so well over the past 25 years. It appears that by the stroke of a pen it can be eliminated, and that Churchill will no longer have the privilege of enjoying good radio communication within the community.

Mr. Ross Milne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I was in the House the day