

shall advance towards an improvement, and as a result the interference will be less than it is at the present time. We are trying to keep man-made noise down to a certain level. Below that level there is always noise which is received on the radio receiver provided that the receiver is turned on sufficiently. With poor reception, due to the present condition of sun spots, it is often necessary to increase the volume considerably in order to get a distant station; when that is done a level of noise is broken into which we cannot and do not attempt to control, and the result is very poor reception. I mention these points because a great many people are saying, and with reason, that reception this year is worse than it has been. That is the position so far as the suppression of noise and interference is concerned. I believe we are carrying out our work to a proper degree, but the fact that reception is poor arises out of a condition which is somewhat worse than we have had in the past few years.

Mr. MacNEIL: What facilities exist in Vancouver to deal with interference resulting from electrical appliances? How many officials are appointed to do the work, and how far do their districts extend?

Mr. HOWE: Our Vancouver office covers the whole of British Columbia. At that point there are two interference cars, and a staff of four. The cars are equipped with the latest equipment for tracing interference, and are kept very busy in the area.

Mr. MITCHELL: Which of the fifty-two offices mentioned by the minister is located near Medicine Hat, Alberta?

Mr. HOWE: There are officers at Moose Jaw and two at Calgary.

Mr. MITCHELL: People in Medicine Hat are experiencing considerable difficulty through interference. At that point the radio corporation retains a man who, if my memory serves me correctly, receives something like \$15 a month. He gives all his ordinary time to his own work, and trouble-finding is only an out-of-hours occupation for him. I believe he also sells licences. The results are very unsatisfactory. We rarely see a trouble car in the vicinity. There is no place to which we can phone to get assistance, and the people in the locality feel that adequate attention is not being given to the matter and that they are not getting proper value for the licence fees they pay. What can we expect in the future?

[Mr. Howe.]

Mr. HOWE: May I correct my former statement by stating that, as indicated by the hon. member, we do have a part-time man stationed at Medicine Hat. He does what he can to trace interference, and when the difficulty is beyond his capability he calls in a trouble car. This service has no connection with radio licence fees. It is paid for by a vote of parliament, whereas the licence fees go to pay for the broadcasts. I shall be glad to look into the situation at Medicine Hat and see if some improvement cannot be made.

Mr. MITCHELL: If the man was paid enough by the government to make it worth his while to spend all his time on that work, there is plenty there to keep him busy.

Mr. MacNEIL: I should like to urge upon the minister an extension of the service to the suburban areas around the city of Vancouver. I refer particularly to West Vancouver, North Vancouver and North Burnaby. I have received numerous complaints from people who say that there is serious radio interference from defective electrical appliances, so much so that at times it is impossible to get the local stations. They say that this matter has been reported to the local departmental officials. A car was sent into the district but it was not possible to have it remain a sufficient length of time to trace down the source of trouble. The officials informed those who are in correspondence with me that they are so under-staffed and their facilities so meagre that they are unable to deal effectively with the trouble. Many of these people live adjacent to industrial plants and other institutions, and they feel that a check-up should be made of possible defective electrical appliances. Will it be possible with the increase in this vote to extend the service into the suburban areas around the city of Vancouver?

Mr. HOWE: We appreciate that another radio car is needed in British Columbia and we shall endeavour to provide it before next summer.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): What are the duties of the temporary assistants?

Mr. HOWE: A portion of those employed in the government service are temporaries. So far as radio cars are concerned, the civil service commission has ruled that the drivers shall be considered as temporary employees. They are all engaged in this work and there is really no difference between the temporary and the permanent employees.