

*Supply—C.B.C.*

the president of the Canadian historical association. The writer asked the question: Is there a Canada; is there a Canadian nation? He answered that question affirmatively but he also said, as the hon. gentleman himself hinted this afternoon, that Canadians are prone to take their livers out, prop them up on their knees and examine them introspectively to find out whether they are suffering from cirrhosis or some other ailment. I think there is this introspective quality among Canadians, an inferiority complex even, which requires a careful study. Possibly the minister in his statement this afternoon opened the way to a discussion of that matter at some time in the future, but certainly not this afternoon.

The minister referred specifically to the various agencies for which he is responsible. He referred to the board of broadcast governors, to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and to others and he mentioned the fact that there are conflicts and ambiguities in relation particularly to the act which should be clarified. With that I quite agree. When the minister responsible for that legislation first introduced it into the house he said that it was something of an experiment, that there were bound to be difficulties emerging in connection with its administration.

We were facing a situation at that time which was novel. Up until then the C.B.C. had complete control of all agencies so far as broadcasting was concerned. Pressure was put on the C.B.C., and incidentally on the government, to set up a regulatory body and the government of that day felt its way along the pathway. I think it felt its way fairly well, but undoubtedly far from perfectly. Then they set up the B.B.G. In introducing the legislation the minister at that time stated it would certainly require amendment and careful study, and he thought that within three or four years parliament would have to review the whole situation. I am glad to hear that the minister agrees with the minister of that day and apparently he intends to revise this legislation. There are one or more committees now studying the whole problem, and it is certainly one worthy of very careful study.

The committee of this house has spent some considerable time, particularly on interim supply, in relation to the C.B.C. There were many questions asked during those days which I think the minister is expected to answer. The fact that they were asked and that the minister will deal with them—I hope—will justify at least to some extent what

sometimes alleged in certain quarters not too far removed from over our right shoulders—I refer to the press gallery—to be a waste of time on interim supply, because the more these matters are worked over in interim supply and the more the minister answers them now, the less time will have to be spent on the estimates of the C.B.C. itself.

I am not one of those, Mr. Chairman—I am sure I do not need to tell the committee this—who feels that parliament or the government should dispose of the C.B.C. I think the C.B.C. has performed and is performing an integral service in the development of the Canadian nation. I would deprecate any suggestion that we should do away with or should sell, or anything of that kind, this corporation. After all, it was established many years ago; and without indulging in any partisan memories I would just like to say it was set up by a Conservative government under Right Hon. R. B. Bennett. I see the minister is shaking his head; I appreciate some vague efforts were made in this regard by the preceding government, but the government of Right Hon. R. B. Bennett brought it to fruition. Although changes have been made from time to time by parliament and there have been many investigations, complaints and inquiries, every time the answer comes back that the C.B.C. is an essential part of our development and deserves the support of this country. And I agree with that.

However, this does not mean I agree with all of the actions of the C.B.C. at this time. Frankly I feel that the C.B.C. is required to exercise more self-discipline perhaps than it has heretofore. If it does not I am afraid that the government, or even parliament, will be pressured into exercising that discipline, and it will be necessary so to exercise it. I am not talking now about programming. Many of the programs of the C.B.C. I think are excellent; I think some of them are atrocious. But after all, that is only my opinion and I think in this area we are all entitled to our own opinions and the C.B.C. should not be criticized in this regard.

There was a time, Mr. Chairman, when I sat where the present minister now sits, and there was not one day that I did not receive between 25 and 50 letters. Half a dozen of them would be blasphemous. Well, they would not exactly be blasphemous because the authors of them would not indulge in blasphemy, but they were expressing opinions about what were called indecent and obscene programs produced by the C.B.C. and tele-