

Broadcasting

for the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) and for the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue) who is the leader of this group in this house—

Mr. Pickersgill: Or the premier of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Herridge:—to bring before the people of Canada the important things which are being discussed and considered in this parliament and which are very directly related to their daily lives and the future of their children. I do urge that some consideration be given to that so that there is left on the public mind and on the young people's minds of this country the correct impression as to the importance of the parliament of Canada in relation to other governments and parliaments on the North American continent.

Having said that, I must say that I listened with great interest to the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo (Mr. Carter) and his remarks about the C.B.C. brainwashing the Canadian public and suggesting some sort of, shall I say, code as to what they could do with respect to the presentation of ideas in this country. I think to most this is a new brand of Liberalism. I was thinking of some of the Gladstone speeches that I have read, and the speeches of Asquith, of Campbell Bannerman, of Lloyd George, and of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. I am sure that not one of those great past leaders of the Liberal party would ever have suggested that there should be, shall I say, a control of thought on the national radio system of this country. We fought for freedom and freedom of expression, and every person in this country who obeys the law of this land and acts as a good citizen is entitled to that freedom of thought and that freedom of expression whether we disagree with it or not. I am one who believes that given freedom of thought and freedom of expression, in the clash of ideas truth will prevail. If we think otherwise, Mr. Speaker, we underestimate the common sense, the sanity, and the understanding of our democratic institutions on the part of the Canadian people.

I am now going to divert the direction of my thought from the general to the particular, and when I talk of particulars, Mr. Speaker, you will find me well within the confines of Kootenay West. Let me say that the people of the Rossland-Trail area and the Nelson area are very pleased indeed that finally the C.B.C. has erected a satellite station on Red mountain and also a satellite near Beasley bluffs in Nelson. Persons who are receiving C.B.C. programs now write me in numbers and express their pleasure at this opportunity to receive and hear the

programs of our national broadcasting system. But when you do that you create an even greater demand on the part of people in the smaller communities who are denied this opportunity to hear C.B.C. programs in the same way as their neighbours in other communities.

I believe it was the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Simpson) who referred to the 18 or 20 per cent of Canadians who are still denied C.B.C. television programs. In my district, Mr. Speaker, there are some 5,000 or more people who to this date are denied the opportunity to hear C.B.C. radio programs while other places have had television service for years. I have had letters from these various places and I urge the minister to bring to the attention of the C.B.C. the great desire of these smaller communities to be served by C.B.C. programs, both radio and television. I have written letters on a number of occasions and have raised the question in the house year after year.

I was informed last year that the C.B.C. was reviewing the question. I realize all the difficulties. These are persons living in smaller communities of a thousand or less who are making a contribution to the wealth of this country, and I think persons living in the smaller communities are, if anything, entitled to receive special consideration because of the particular advantages that television and radio have given to those who are not denied the cultural activities that prevail in the larger centres. Therefore I do urge that this matter be given some consideration.

For years I have made representations in the house and to the appropriate ministers and officials about the need for some sort of satellite community television broadcasting stations, and I am not talking about cable stations at the present time but about those that simply receive the signal and rebroadcast it and which operate on batteries or some other motive power. I was very glad that the department under the former minister of transport gave consideration to this question, recognized the need and drew up a set of rules and regulations. I am very pleased to know that only two days ago the cabinet passed an order in council authorizing temporary licences for the Saddle mountain broadcasting station and the Mount Sentinel broadcasting station. These are temporary licences granted until these communities can in some way obtain C.B.C. programs.

All these stations pick up United States programs and in the first instance the people are pleased to receive them. But in conversation with hundreds of people and in letters I have received from my constituents they tell me that they want to receive the C.B.C. both on television and on radio.