

Supply—Secretary of State

Bécharde) say that he was taking it upon himself to listen to any matter related to broadcasting to which we might call his and the government's attention.

It is a rather costly service for Canadian taxpayers. It is true, as the previous speaker just said, that the C.B.C. now has a new management: new presidents, new vice-presidents and new secretaries. We can only express the wish now that this new management will take into account the true situation prevailing in Canada at present and that it will not try to lay down policies but rather to serve the best interests of the Canadian people.

Too often in the past, we have had to deplore serious mistakes on the part of C.B.C. officials, even some high officials. This makes us invite the new administration to be careful, to avoid errors as much as possible. Mistakes will be made, that happens everywhere—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, if members hear me as well as I hear them, they hear me very well indeed! I understand that many of them are not interested in what we have to say about a state corporation, and that is why we see quite often that positions are taken which are not compatible with the studies we must make in the house.

Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to speak very long about the C.B.C. tonight. I would only say again that we want the C.B.C. to deal with everyone fairly and impartially, to give the Canadian people a just treatment.

In the past, we have seen certain groups receive preferential treatment while others were almost totally ignored. In my opinion, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation should respect all schools of thought in Canada and all should be allowed to express their opinion, for only thus, in my opinion, will we achieve greater understanding.

Everyone does not necessarily have the same ideas and opinions. However, the C.B.C. should recognize this basic principle and allow all groups to express their opinions, explain their program and put forward their point of view. This will help to create a spirit of good will and mutual respect in Canada.

Mr. Chairman, I said earlier that on many occasions, we had cause to complain about the administration within the C.B.C. For instance, with regard to news coverage, we are given daily reports on the Viet Nam war,

[Mr. Caouette.]

while current events in Canada are systematically ignored. We are told about terrible massacres which occur thousands of miles away, in countries where the C.B.C. sends reporters with cameras and so on. This is beyond me.

It is all very well to tell us what is going on in Viet Nam, but it is another matter to devote energies and millions of dollars to present solely, more or less, news about war and its atrocities. In my opinion, it would be more important to earmark that money for the extension of broadcasting services to those areas of the country which are still without them.

I want to mention, for example, certain towns in northern Quebec, like Chibougamau and Chapais, where C.B.C. television programs cannot be received. The inhabitants of Parent, along the C.N.R. tracks, cannot receive them either.

For six years now, we have been calling for television for the French-speaking citizens of British Columbia. We are told that when the necessary money is available, the French television network will be extended to the population of western Canada.

We hear in this house flamboyant statements to the effect that there is a wish to respect bilingualism, that the French-speaking citizens should have the same advantages as the English-speaking, that they should receive equal treatment. But the only place where all Canadians receive equal treatment by the C.B.C. is in the province of Quebec.

Mr. Chairman, it would cost far less to the government or to the crown corporation to provide a French television service in the western provinces than to cover wars in Viet Nam, Korea, Africa or other countries in the world.

It is all very well to give us news coverage of current events but, I repeat, we should first provide services for our own people at home.

It would be very interesting, for example, to have television programs showing the Rocky Mountains and the beautiful lakes in that region. It would also be interesting to see the sights in eastern Canada, in the maritime provinces and in the province of Quebec, for example: the Manicouagan or other very important industries, which would be of great interest to Canadians in the west.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that the new C.B.C. management will take into account the wishes of the people, which are mainly to know their country and be informed of what is going on