

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

it will not be lost. We shall keep at it until it is won.

I do not know who it is in the cabinet who is holding this up. I know one member who was against it, for he told me so. I can mention this now because he has since left the cabinet. But there must be somebody else in the cabinet who is objecting to it. I know where the President of the Treasury Board stands. He has told us publicly, and I am sure he will not mind my saying that he has told me personally and privately. He thinks something should be done. I plead with him not to let this issue be stalled any longer. Let us have action on it now. I see, Mr. Speaker, that you are at the edge of your chair and so I leave my earnest plea with the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would simply reply briefly to the hon. gentleman opposite by saying the steps he has outlined were the steps that were taken. He indicated my personal concern in this particular matter. In due course the government agreed to refer it to a joint committee of the house and the other place. That committee made its report and the committee report was then transmitted to cabinet.

The cabinet has been considering the matter. I can assure the hon. gentleman only that the matter is still on the cabinet agenda. It has not been dropped by the cabinet, but a decision on the matter by the cabinet has not yet been made. When a decision is made I will transmit it to the house. As the hon. member has indicated, he knows my personal feeling in the matter, and I trust it will not get too far into the fall before a report can be made to the house by myself.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION
—SASKATOON—INQUIRY AS TO STATION
CONSTRUCTION

Mr. L. M. Brand (Saskatoon): Mr. Speaker, I should like this evening to make a plea once more in the house for C.B.C. television coverage for the constituency of Saskatoon and the surrounding area. Undoubtedly the government must be aware that the story of C.B.C. coverage for my constituency has been a story of frustration, a story of delays, a story of indecision. In other words, nothing has been done despite numerous petitions and letters sent over the past few years to the government of Canada and also to the C.B.C.

We are wondering where exactly the hold-up on this matter is. I refer to the white

[Mr. Knowles.]

paper on broadcasting. At page 10 it points out:

The government has advised the Board of Broadcast Governors that, pending the enactment of new legislation, it is now prepared to consider issuing second-station television licences on the recommendation of the board, subject to the reservation for the use of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation of channels in Victoria, B.C.; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan—

Of course that came after the big freeze was put on any expansion by the C.B.C. The government has advised that it is prepared to consider issuing these licences. What has happened since? Nothing very much has happened. Along came the report of the standing committee of the house on broadcasting which, on page 9, reads as follows:

The committee concurs with the statement on structure appearing in the white paper—

That is the one to which I have referred.

—particularly with reference to extending coverage to all Canadians, and to full network services in both official languages.

We recommend further that, wherever practical, in areas now receiving only one Canadian service, if the service is through a private outlet, the alternative should be provided by C.B.C. If C.B.C. is now the sole service, the second service should be private. Where there are serious obstacles to such parallel development, however, these should not prohibit the extension of alternate service by other means, at least on a temporary basis. We urge that the introduction of dual service proceed as rapidly as C.B.C. finances and local market conditions permit.

I submit that the local market conditions certainly have been met in the city of Saskatoon with the broadcast area it has. We are the only major city in western Canada which is without a C.B.C. television outlet. I think it is very important indeed that the people in this area should have the privilege of sharing in the benefits from the tax money which is used in the support of the C.B.C.

Despite everything we have done there always seems to be something blocking the actual construction of a C.B.C. station at Saskatoon. You will recall that it was held up first by the government freeze on expenditures by the C.B.C. Then, permission was given to go ahead, but the B.B.G. hearing was delayed. The hearing was to be held in January but was delayed until April. Finally, the B.B.G. gave approval early in May this year. Then the Department of Transport, which had to pass on the technical matters, gave its permission as well.

Now, what has happened? I, personally, have attempted to find out by phoning several government departments which might