

REMOTE-AREA BROADCASTS

At a recent public hearing in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the Canadian Radio-Television Commission considered the extension of television service in English and French in the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

In accordance with the decisions taken at the Halifax hearing and the general discussion on that occasion, the Commission believes it appropriate to continue to press for the extension of basic and alternate Canadian broadcasting services in English and in French.

Television has been in existence for 20 years in Canada. Viewers in the more densely populated areas have had their choice of television viewing expanded from two or more off-air channels to a multiplicity of choices on conventional and cable television. Currently, the Commission is aware of the energy and attention being given to the proliferation of services in these areas where a wide choice exists, and it believes this development makes the plight of Canadians without any services or without service in their own language a matter of the utmost urgency.

The Commission is determined to maintain a priority for the establishment of broadcasting services in important but often geographically-remote areas such the North Shore of the St. Lawrence, Labrador, Newfoundland and the Gaspé Peninsula. A similar necessity prevails in the northern portions of all the provinces from Quebec to British Columbia, as well as the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Canadian broadcasting services in remote and developing areas contribute not only cultural and recreational amenities that are less abundant in such areas than in other parts of the country but they also are vital to economic and resource development.

The Commission will, accordingly, accelerate its discussion with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Telesat, and the common carriers in formulating plans to expedite the extension of service as rapidly as possible. The Commission will also undertake immediate discussions with the Government on this matter.

LABOUR MINISTERS MEET

Canada's provincial labour ministers recently ended a two-day conference in Ottawa at which discussion centred on recent and planned changes in labour law, approaches to minimum wage determination and measures to protect the rights of women in the labour force.

MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION

The ministers reviewed the minimum wages established in the different jurisdictions across Canada and examined together a number of the factors to be considered when minimum wage levels are being set. They agreed that these factors differed in varying

degree from one jurisdiction to another. They also agreed that there was a need for more intensive study by labour departments of the economic effects of the minimum wage in particular industries and regions and the relation of the minimum wage to other aspects of social policy.

The discussions covered the need for improvements in laws affecting women in the labour force, including those designed to establish equal opportunity, equal pay for equal work and an entitlement to maternity leave. Relevant recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and standards established by conventions of the International Labour Organization were discussed. Further federal-provincial consultation on the subject will take place as the current review of the Royal Commission recommendations proceeds.

The review of recent and planned changes in labour law covered a number of fields, including industrial relations, labour standards and safety. A frank exchange of views provided an improved understanding of the rationale underlying policy developments in the different jurisdictions.

The conference, chaired by Federal Labour Minister Bryce Mackasey, was attended by ministers from seven provinces.

WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY DELEGATES

Dr. Maurice LeClair, Deputy Minister of National Health, led Canada's delegation to the twenty-fourth annual assembly of the World Health Organization, which was held in Geneva from May 4 to 21. Other delegates were Mr. George Ignatieff, Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations at Geneva; Dr. Jacques Gelin, Special Adviser to the Executive Council of Quebec; Dr. J.S. Robertson, Deputy Minister of Health for Nova Scotia; Dr. P.B. Rose, Deputy Minister of Health for Alberta; Dr. David Sackett, head of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario; and Dr. Basil Layton, Canada's representative on the WHO Executive Board and Principal Medical Officer, International Health, Department of National Health and Welfare.

The main item of business was the review and approval of the 1972 program and budget. Agenda items of wide public interest included the human environment, the cholera pandemic, malaria and smallpox eradication, the safety and efficacy of drugs and the health consequences of smoking.

Canada is one of the 24 member-states on the Executive Board of WHO, represented by Dr. Layton. This Assembly completed Canada's three-year term on the Board. Some 1,000 representatives of the 131 member and associate states attended the Assembly to work towards establishing the principles and practice of preventive medicine in their own countries and in others through the sharing of skills and knowledge.