

Interim Supply

I am in the same position as every other hon. member at the moment in that we do not know whether we will be back here after a certain Monday in June.

The question I wish to raise relates to what I consider to be a limitation on the effectiveness of the work that individual members of this house, and particularly new members, are able to achieve. This limitation is imposed by the curtailed secretarial help with which we are provided. I know the citizens of Comox-Alberni expect their member of parliament to devote his full time to representing them both during the time the house is in session and when it is not. From my experience in the past four years I know there have been times when quite serious limitations have been imposed on the kind of job I consider I could have done because of the fact that I have not had adequate secretarial assistance. I am sure there are a good many other hon. members of this house, particularly those who are now completing their first parliament, who have felt this limitation; and I feel that this is a point to which a good deal of study might be given by those who are in a position to do that between now and the time the new parliament convenes.

It would certainly be in the interests of the people of Canada if hon. members of this house, at least during the time parliament is in session, were provided with at least one full-time secretary to assist them in performing their duties. I could go further than that and say that from my own experience I feel I could do a much more effective job for my constituents if I were able to have the year-round services of a secretary. I have found it necessary to secure secretarial help at my own expense during the time I spent in my constituency in the recess between sittings of parliament. That sort of arrangement necessarily has to be rather haphazard, because of the lack of continuity in the secretarial help which it is possible to obtain.

As I have said, I am in the same position as every other hon. member of this house at the moment in not knowing whether I will continue to be a member of the house, and because of this I felt I could raise this question today in the hope that if not for myself, at least for future members of this house something may be done to improve the situation.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, my remarks will be very brief; in fact, I think about two or three minutes will be ample time for me to call the attention of the government to a few matters.

[Mr. Barnett.]

First of all I would like to heartily endorse the observations made yesterday by the hon. member for Bow River relative to freight rates. We have constantly objected to the rash of increases which have brought the rates up to their present levels. It is not necessary for me to go into detail with respect to this and outline the discriminatory effect the freight rates have on the economy of the province of British Columbia and my own constituency. I do believe that the rates as they now obtain are much higher than is warranted, and I would join with the hon. member for Bow River in suggesting that there be a complete overhaul of the freight rate structure.

The other matter to which I wish to briefly direct attention relates to the television service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. We have now come to the point where we recognize the importance of this particular medium of communication. Not only does it disseminate information; it also provides entertainment, though some of it is possibly very questionable in terms of value. Nevertheless television has become a recognized service as far as our society is concerned; therefore I feel that all our people should have the advantage of this particular facility. In view of the position occupied by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in this field I feel they should give serious consideration to extending the coverage in various sections of our country.

I wish to call particular attention to a section of my own constituency extending from Laidlaw in the Fraser valley up to Siska Lodge, which represents a considerable area. The reception there is very poor; in fact some areas are not covered at all. The residents of that area feel justified in seeking some remedial action; therefore I make the request through the responsible minister that this subject be taken into consideration. If it has not already been given consideration and a survey made I would request that this be done at the earliest possible moment, so these people may have the opportunity of taking advantage of this service.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, I rise to deal with a point raised yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to a case which has been in all our minds, the death of Mr. Herbert Norman, and also to deal with one or two questions asked this morning concerning that case and two questions raised on the orders of the day by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra. Perhaps I could deal with the latter first, Mr. Chairman.

This morning the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra asked whether the United Nations emergency force at present had any function to perform in the Suez canal area.