

Television Transmission Facilities

I am a little surprised to hear the member for Saint-Denis tell us that the main difficulties at the moment are especially financial.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to sending funds anywhere in the world, for the development of underdeveloped areas, the question of whether or not we have the money is never asked. It can always be had.

I agree wholeheartedly with the hon. member for Meadow Lake when he says that all northern areas of all the Canadian provinces are underdeveloped regions.

What culture television can give them will be of great help, and will even contribute to developments right across Canada.

Southernmost regions have benefited far more from television. They have access to the C.B.C. network as well as to several private radio and television stations; they also have access to television from the United States.

Northern regions have no television whatsoever and C.B.C. reception is very poor.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that if the present government wanted to go to the trouble of doing so, it would find a way of financing the expansion into the north of the C.B.C. network to enable it to serve all the regions which are inhabited to a certain extent.

We are told it is going to be very costly. Still, the citizens of northern areas, such as the people of Chibougamau-Chapais in my area, have contributed through their income tax and other taxes to the financing of television network developments in southerly regions. It would be proper, now, for the other citizens of the country to help finance that C.B.C. development.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that no member would object if the government were to propose the allocation of the necessary funds for this development.

High-ranking officials of the C.B.C. tell us that it is physically possible to provide service in all areas of the north. Thus, the government need only make financially possible what is already physically possible and everyone will be satisfied.

• (6:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take too much of the time of the house in debating this matter since the debate appears to be rapidly coming to a conclusion. I would be happy if the house would accept this resolution. I should

[Mr. Laprise.]

like to add by wholehearted support to the motion of the hon. member for Meadow Lake (Mr. Cadieu). On numerous occasions I have spoken in the house of the need for extending C.B.C. television services into the northern parts of our provinces and indeed into the Northwest Territories.

I was interested and a little surprised at the remarks of the hon. member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme). I really do feel he is interested in this problem. He said it was a matter of financing and in a way he is quite right. He appeared to be wondering if the financing of this project was justified at this time and mentioned that these things would be discussed during the meetings of the Committee on Broadcasting. I am not a member of that committee at this time. I am interested in becoming a member of the committee, and I hope that by the time the committee meets I will have succeeded in becoming a member of it.

I should like to say to all hon. members of the house, particularly those on the government side, that this is an extremely important matter. As I mentioned the other night, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has finally recommended to the government that parliament provide the money necessary to extend this service just as they recommended the expenditure on coloured television. This expenditure would allow the corporation to complete the extension of service into areas now unserved. I feel that this is the crux of the matter and that parliament at this session should provide sufficient money to allow the corporation to do this job. Every member should impress upon the government the necessity for parliament providing this money.

The Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh) has said she has asked the C.B.C. to provide the government with an estimate of the approximate cost of extending C.B.C. television service to these areas. In its annual statement last year the C.B.C. stated the cost would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$15 million. This may seem like quite a sum of money but recently we passed estimates containing a subsidy of some \$96 million or \$97 million to the C.B.C. The estimates with which we are going to deal later this session contain an appropriation of \$110 million for the C.B.C. or almost \$15 million more than the amount we just voted. Although \$15 million may seem like a large sum of money we should stop and think of the hundreds of millions of dollars which have been spent in