

Supply—Secretary of State

Mr. Prittie: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a few remarks while we are on the item concerning the Board of Broadcast Governors. The hon. member for Oxford made a complaint about the news coverage on the C.B.C., and the leader of my party, the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, also made a passing reference to this subject in the debate which followed the February 19 incident. I am not inclined to make very much of that at the moment because the C.B.C. has a new management, and I think it is only fair for members of the house to give the new president and executive vice president some time to assume control of their jobs and make whatever changes they think are necessary in the operation of the corporation. So I will refrain from making any other remarks concerning the C.B.C. at this time.

The new Broadcasting Act has now received royal assent, and I wish to express the hope that the members of the regulatory authority, the chairman, vice chairman and the members who are to make up the new Canadian Radio and Television Commission, will be appointed without too much delay. We have been drifting for a number of years in the field of broadcasting, beginning with the Fowler report, which was followed by the white paper on broadcasting. Then followed the committee's study on the white paper, and then finally the long debate on the act itself.

It took the government a long time to find the personnel to head the C.B.C.

• (8:10 p.m.)

We understand a number of people refused the job. Let us hope that it will not take as long for the government to find personnel to man the new regulatory authority, because that body will have very important work. The new authority will have the job of controlling radio and television broadcasting in Canada. There are a number of very important things which have to be tackled and the sooner these people are appointed the better.

Then, I should like to refer to some of the items that need to be looked at in the very near future. We have had very strong representations made to the broadcasting committee about the employment of Canadian talent. This is a matter which really cannot be left too much longer. Month by month talented Canadians, actors, writers and producers leave for the United States and the United Kingdom. This problem, if allowed to continue for a matter of a year or two, will result in the loss of the pool of talent this

country has to do the kind of broadcasting that should be done.

Another matter with which we are dealing in the broadcasting committee at the present time is educational television. One of the matters about which we hear a great deal is whether educational television should be on very high frequency or ultra-high frequency. Recommendations have been made by a number of groups that have appeared before the committee to the effect that all television receivers in Canada should be equipped to receive ultra-high frequency channels. They are not, as yet. Over two years ago I introduced a private members bill on this subject. There is a provision in the new act which would allow the regulatory authority to require Canadian importers or manufacturers to build into all T.V. sets the capacity to receive ultra-high frequency channels. I say this because there are sets still being manufactured without this capability. In fact most sets manufactured in Canada are in this category, and it is going to be essential when educational television actually gets on the air in this country. When that will be I do not know, at the rate we are going at the present time. So I do urge simply that the government, without too much delay, find the people necessary to staff the new Canadian Radio and Television Commission. This commission has in front of it some very important tasks. Enough has been said about broadcasting in general during the debate which took place only last month, so I shall confine my remarks to these few at the present time.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. Before we proceed any further with the consideration of the estimates I wonder if we could have some information from the government house leader as to which member of the administration is responsible for piloting these estimates tonight. Several times we have had the President of the Treasury Board in charge, but tonight perhaps it is the Minister without Portfolio who is sitting on the front bench. He always seems to be around whenever a crisis develops.

Mr. Béchard: Mr. Chairman, in the absence of the Secretary of State who will be back later tonight, I am taking notes of the representations made by hon. members concerning these supplementary estimates.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, I was glad to hear the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr.