

Mr. Chaston: Perhaps I should make it clear that we have a programme director and this is the kind of information on which he would have more accurate answers than I. Perhaps we could get this from him and give the information to the Committee later.

Senator McElman: Do you have a general idea?

Mr. Chaston: We don't get ratings the same way radio stations get ratings. We can only judge by reaction from the phone calls we have.

One programme is a pet show which has been on for more than 18 months at this point. A fellow brings a pet or a fish or whatever and talks about it at some length. It is mainly a children's show and there is a great deal of interest. The last 15 minutes are devoted to incoming phone calls, enquiries about the programme and the animal and what-all. That 15 minutes is predominantly full. There is a flood of phone calls.

There are many instance of that kind. This is the only way we can judge true reaction. Of course we get four or five hundred letters a week but basically they are phone responses of this kind and it is very obvious when it is being well followed.

I could cite special instances, such as Christmas time and this sort of thing, where phone calls are made and we have hours of phone calls coming in from children.

Senator McElman: One last question on this area. During the period that you have been doing original broadcasting, have your rates increased at all?

Mr. Chaston: No.

The Chairman: It was not necessary in consequence of that?

Mr. Boucher: May I answer the Senator, which is also in the same vein?

The Chairman: Senator McElman or myself?

Mr. Boucher: You, Senator Davey. With regards to the question as to what can we do as a group to accelerate this. This is the way I understood it.

At our next convention, which is about three or four weeks from today, a great deal of time is being spent and we have solicited aid and are encouraged by the help that we are going to receive from professional people.

We have scheduled seminars and panels to explain how to go about finding this type of programming, to educate us in the art of research and many of the questions you suggest we should be looking into.

The Chairman: Mr. Boucher, perhaps a study undertaken by this Committee might be of interest to you and you might wish to comment on it.

We decided as a Committee we should attempt to determine the degree of interest in broadcasting among special interest or minority groups. That being so, we decided to contact some of the special interest groups as well as contact a number of cable operators.

We were interested in determining how interested cablecasters would be in this kind of programming and what groups specifically might be interested in availing themselves of such an opportunity.

We wrote 150 organizations, and as this has happened very recently, I can only give you an indication. In the first group of replies, we heard from eight organizations. The eight organizations without exception all would like to develop material for programmes and assist in their production. Most would like them to be televised programs. We received replies from The Canadian Association of Real Estate Boards, the Czechoslovak National Association of Canada, the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada, Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the London Symphony Orchestra, The Farmers' Union of Alberta, the Canadian Combined Training Association Inc. and the Canadian Bar Association.

As I say that was the very initial response we have had and every one of those organizations expressed the keenest possible interest in this kind of programming.

Let me say by the same token that the cable operators we contacted, and we contacted 115 of them and we have heard back from 11. With the exception of the very small operators, people in some cases with under 250 subscribers who have indicated they didn't think it would be financially sensible, everyone above that size again indicated considerable interest.

I think it is a question of marrying the two and you might have something very worthwhile.

Mr. Boucher: I think it is a matter of time in compiling a list. Of course this must be launched at the community level rather than approaching national groups.