

*Radio Broadcasting*

Mr. CAYLEY: In our hurry to put through this bill I omitted to ask what was meant by subsection (g) of section 8. What has the Prime Minister in mind there?

Mr. BENNETT: It will be remembered that in small local communities where it is desired that there be local broadcasting stations, there might be some difficulty in the way of providing for the construction and operation of such stations, and this provision will enable the commission, if it is thought desirable, to assist and encourage the construction of such stations, since otherwise such communities be deprived of the value of any national broadcasting efforts.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: From the point of view of the avoidance of political partisanship, may I mention to the Prime Minister that possibly the appointment of the commissioners might be made by a method similar to that adopted some years ago, in the appointment of a chief electoral officer, at which time there was a conference between the two sides of the house. I do not urge that suggestion, but I place it before the Prime Minister for his consideration. He may recall that when Colonel Biggar was chosen chief electoral officer the appointment was made as the result of a conference between both sides of the house, and as long as Colonel Biggar occupied that position he held the confidence of all parties. Whether or not that method would be advisable in this instance I leave it entirely to the Prime Minister to say. We must recognize that in radio broadcasting political partisanship, should it be indulged in at all, might become a very serious affair. I do not for a moment suggest or insinuate that such would be the case, but we must recognize that if this were to be done the dangers might be very considerable and the resultant discontent very grave. Anything that will help remove the possibility of the slightest suspicion of political partisanship will be most helpful. In that regard might there not be an advantage in adopting, in connection with this measure, what was suggested and in fact is intended with respect to the modifications that are being made in relation to the Civil Service Commission. If I recollect rightly, it is intended that a standing committee of this house shall have an opportunity of reviewing from year to year, matters that come under the provisions of the Civil Service Act. It might be advisable to extend that provision to take in matters coming within the scope of the radio broadcasting commission's work. I suggest this for the consideration of the government.

[Mr. Bennett.]

Mr. BENNETT: Perhaps the last point raised by the right hon. gentleman is covered by section 4:

The commission may employ such technical, professional and other officers, and clerks and employees, as may be necessary. Such officers, clerks and employees shall be appointed pursuant to the Civil Service Act.

Therefore the operations of these employees and servants would, in my judgment, come within the purview of the powers of the committee. I do not think there can be any doubt about that; it is fairly clear. I fancy that in passing the section the committee did not observe that these appointments are all to be made by the Civil Service Commission. As to the first point raised by the right hon. gentleman, I certainly will give it serious consideration.

Mr. MALCOLM: I would direct the Prime Minister's attention to section 5. Subsection 1 provides:

The commission shall be a body corporate having capacity to contract and to sue and to be sued in the name of the commission.

As I understood the right hon. gentleman's remarks, the commission are to handle no money whatever. Cheques are to be issued by the minister of the department in charge of this commission. We must remember that everything which is done in connection with operating radio stations is done subject to patent, and should patent litigation arise as a result of some action of the commission and should the holder of the patent be sued, what provision would be made for satisfying any judgment that might be given against the commission.

Mr. BENNETT: Obviously, I suppose, the same situation would arise as arises in any case in which judgment is recovered against any defendant. The defendant in this case would have to secure from parliament such funds as might be necessary for the purpose of discharging the judgment. Possibly I did not, I gather from what my hon. friend has said, make the situation as clear as I should have done. While the commission certainly will have a bank account and moneys, the moneys it receives must be paid into the consolidated revenue fund. The treasury department will provide the commission with money with which to carry on business. It does not mean that the payment of men who may do work around the commission's properties will be made through cheques from the treasury. The treasury will give them such funds as may be necessary to enable them to discharge debts under the act. It would be