

to their homes, they should be considered along with the returned men and no injustice should be done to either.

The third point I desire to make is that the broadcasting corporation, which is independent of parliament, is in a similar position to the Canadian National Railways, and I compliment the Minister of Transport (Mr. Howe) upon his acceptance of the view that the people are the shareholders in all our great public holdings, including the railways, broadcasting and other services.

I may be mistaken, and if so I am subject to correction, but it seems to me there is a dual system in reference to broadcasting. On the one hand it is controlled by the broadcasting corporation and is practically government operated. On the other hand there are broadcasting stations which are privately owned. The question is whether the broadcasting corporation will make up their minds to control all private stations, take them over at their real value and operate them, or whether we are to continue to have privately owned stations. If the government is likely to arrive at a decision, which no doubt would be made known to the broadcasting corporation, that all these stations should be publicly controlled, it would seem advisable that, until the question is settled, no more broadcasting licences should be granted to private corporations, with resulting embarrassment to the government itself and to members of this house. I mention this because the matter may possibly bring some embarrassment to my colleague from Halifax and myself; he can speak for himself; I am expressing merely my own view, and I have not any positively fixed ideas on the subject. However, it seems to me that this dual authority and this dual right are not likely to give the best services to all the people. As has been mentioned this afternoon, there are those in various parts of Canada who are not able to receive the same programs in their homes as are available to and provide happy evenings for those in other parts of the dominion.

With reference to the proposed increase in radio licence fees from \$2 to \$2.50, I am pleased to hear that the minister and the government are taking into consideration whether the additional fee is to be imposed. So far as I am advised by those whom I have the honour to represent, including a large number of poor people, they object to this extra fifty cents, and so do I. They feel that \$2 is sufficient. They are the shareholders, and we know that at the annual meeting the shareholders control. I suggest that at least we should give serious consideration to the

majority view of the people in regard to this matter. I am sure the minister will take into serious consideration the points brought forward by various hon. members of all political parties. In the government the wise counsel of the Minister of Transport will no doubt be listened to, and the result transmitted in due course, perhaps over the radio, to the broadcasting corporation.

There is one other point I wish to touch upon for a moment.

Mr. HOWE: Do not talk me out; it is five minutes to six.

Mr. FINN: I do not propose to talk the hon. minister out; I could not if I tried. I shall give way to the minister now, and on a future occasion I hope he will give way to me and that the chairman will not rule me out of order.

Mr. SPENCE: I regret very much that the government saw fit to increase the fee. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has many enemies in the country, and it is always irritating at any time for people to have to pay extra money for anything. My motto is, "Let sleeping dogs lie." In this instance it would be better to secure the extra revenue from some other source, because there is turmoil throughout the dominion. I do not blame the broadcasting corporation for what they are doing, and I do not think anyone should censure them very much, although many people are of the opinion that the corporation is not giving the best service it could.

There is one point I wish to clear up. One hon. member spoke of the great hardship on the people in the dried out area—I assume he comes from the prairies—who are compelled to pay this extra half dollar. I should like to know whether the unemployed who are on relief and people living in the dried out area are forced to pay the licence fee at all. In Toronto those who are on relief are not compelled to buy licences. Considerable discretion is left to the department. I suggest to the minister that if people in the dried out area are compelled to buy licences, not to mention anything about the extra half-dollar, they should not be.

Mr. HOWE: No pressure is brought to bear on anyone who is indigent or on relief.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): They do not know that and they are paying the licence fee.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I am strongly opposed to the increase, for two reasons. One is the extent and the incidence of it, and the other is the apparent manner in which it