

Interim Supply

want to. But as representatives of Canadian citizens we do want to know what is going on, where we are going in the future and what is planned for this huge edifice.

We have heard rumours that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is a gifted favour club; that there are certain reporters and newspapermen connected with the C.B.C. as well as certain television specialists and cameramen who are sent around the world on special news projects. The Olympic games was a prime example. No one who watched the broadcasts and heard the commentary at the Olympic games can voice any criticism; it was an excellent type of program. But I have heard it said in my riding that there were more C.B.C. personnel in Japan than there were Canadian athletes. The people want to know how much such a thing costs, and how much it costs to put on a program.

These are some of the main questions we are asked as members of parliament. This is why I think it is so necessary that we be given an opportunity to pass these questions along to the C.B.C. management. The minister responsible is questioned in the house day after day but gives us the stock answer that he will pass on these questions to the C.B.C., and that is the end of them. We have heard it said with regard to a certain program—I am not going into the details of it—that of 100 telephone calls received 70 expressed indignation at the program and 30 expressed approval. We want to know what happens when the public says it does not like a certain program. Is the program changed? Do the C.B.C. take into consideration the views of the people in future programming or are these views ignored entirely? Unfortunately no matter what the people say their views are entirely ignored by the C.B.C. We should like an opportunity to question some of these officials of the C.B.C. who are directly responsible and find out what are the channels. If a program is not liked or brings on tremendous public indignation, what is the approach to the C.B.C.? Whom must we contact, and what is done about the complaints?

These are some of the questions the C.B.C. could answer if there were a forum. Unless they are given this opportunity the people at large will be more suspicious than ever; and we members of parliament are going to be more suspicious too. When the estimates of the C.B.C. are before us we are going to be asked to grant this considerable sum of money. As was pointed out by other hon. members, we do not want to give an open cheque to this crown corporation when we

do not know what is going to be done with the money. That would not be fair. When the estimates of other departments of government are before the house we can question the very last dollar and get the answers we wish—or at least we have the opportunity to ask questions. This has never been so in respect of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

By those few remarks, Mr. Chairman, I have earnestly attempted to put on the record the views of the people of my riding. As I have pointed out before, our views are perhaps a little different because we have this variety of choice. However, I should like to repeat that the one regret we do have arises from the fact that people are prone to take advantage of United States television and radio rather than of our own C.B.C. That is why we are so concerned that there be nothing done at all, or allowed to be done, to downgrade the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and its programs. That is why I make an earnest plea once again that this government seriously consider placing this entire matter in the hands of a broadcasting committee. Certainly this matter does not have a partisan flavour, but is something from which there can be no political gain. Surely this is something of concern to all the people of Canada because, after all, the taxpayer is footing the bills.

Mr. Chairman, all governments have followed the practice of placing matters, about which they require further study, in the hands of standing committees. By doing so I think this government would have the finest opportunity possible of solving two problems which now exist. It would provide answers to the questions people are asking generally in Canada about the C.B.C., and at the same time give the staff of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, who I am sure are attempting earnestly to provide the very finest entertainment possible, an opportunity to present their side of the story.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Chairman, I would have preferred taking advantage of another occasion to draw to the attention of the Minister of Forestry (Mr. Sauvé), who is not present in this house at this moment, the application of his famous ARDA program in the province of Quebec, and especially in my district of Roberval. The minister will certainly defend his position and say that the projects must be submitted by the provinces, so the officials of his department may examine them.

Nonetheless, all those famous joint programs have a dramatic character: We never