

Speech from the Throne

unprecedented restart. I am pleased, for instance, to see that several citizens from la belle province, the Maritimes—Newfoundland in particular—and the west have joined us to seek their fortune and are now quite happy there.

The riding of Nickel Belt has progressed at a fantastic rate recently and I am sure that it will continue along that line.

However, we must tackle many problems that we still have to face. I refer more particularly to air and water pollution, the high cost of living, which is higher in my area than in most other parts of the country, to the lack of community and cultural centres, the lack of secondary industries or small manufactures that could hire women and older workers who cannot work in mines.

I refer also to the lack of adequate transportation between the main centres in Northern Ontario. Speaking of transportation, Mr. Speaker, the Trans-Canada Highway, in the Sudbury area, is in a lamentable condition. As traffic increases in the area, the building of a four-lane highway is badly needed on the approaches of the town of Sudbury. When one considers that the contribution of the federal government to the province of Ontario for the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway was \$142,029,786 for the past few years, I cannot understand why the government of Ontario could not find the means of improving this highway in my area. I hope that the federal government will exert pressures to that end.

• (2020)

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I am really looking forward to a very progressive fourth session of this Parliament and I hope that the opposition parties will change their pessimistic and negative approach and will finally come forward with new, more progressive and constructive criticism so that together we can move forward and build a better Canada for all Canadians.

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting things that has come up recently has been a small package of goodies from Information Canada to the various private radio stations across the country. Information Canada has been requesting private radio stations to accept canned bits of information on how well things are going in Canada. These are 30 or 60 seconds long and private radio stations are asked to promote them in their spare time.

I suppose it is always very good to have these bits of information going around, such as information on how to get unemployment insurance paid in less than 2 months and other such useful information. But a great many of the private radio stations have been rather concerned about these small pieces of information that were being given to them, and they are beginning to wonder whether perhaps pressure is being applied indirectly to them inasmuch as they have to obtain their licence from the federal government. They are worried that if they do not use this useful, canned, non-political information, as it is described, they might have problems with obtaining their licence. This is a concern that worries a number of private stations.

Then, some of the private station's representatives are somewhat concerned that perhaps these canned bits of

[Mr. Serré.]

information on how to get your unemployment insurance in less than two months, or whatever it is, or on how to get your old age pension early, might possibly wander into the realm of propaganda. These are just the thoughts and concerns that arise. Also, private station operators seem to be more and more concerned that the government is placing more and more restrictions on private broadcasters but on the other hand does not seem to give anything back to them.

One of the questions that arises in the minds of many private broadcasters is whether the other branches of the media, such as the press, are having the same opportunity to publish these goodies on how the government is operating, and whether the government is paying the press for publishing these things, because they are certainly not offering the private broadcasters anything: the broadcasters find that the government tells them, "We will not pay you, but you can publish it in your spare time. It increases your Canadian content".

Private radio stations have been having a tough time as it is. A lot of pressure has been put on them by the government restricting what they can and what they cannot do, and now the implication is that they must publish these pieces of information. It is not said that they have to do so, but it is suggested that it might be advisable. It seems to me that if the government wants to try to advertise what it is doing in other branches of the media such as the press, and is paying them a fee for this, certainly the private broadcasters, who have been having a pretty rough time, might at least be offered a nominal payment for publishing the history of all the great things which the government is doing in all the branches of the public service.

Having said that, there is a matter that I would like to deal with for a moment in some depth, that is, the problems of the Unemployment Insurance Commission which have developed into nothing less than a national scandal. The trouble started a couple of years ago when legislation was introduced in the House closing the local offices of the Unemployment Insurance Commission in the smaller and middle-sized industrial cities throughout Ontario and, I presume, elsewhere. A number of members of the House who are still here, myself included—and I can think of the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters), the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Hales) and, as I recall, some government members—objected at the time and said that if the local offices were closed, people could not go in and inquire about their unemployment insurance claims and there would be trouble.

All hon. members who have had some practical experience in this regard were treated with superior and pitying smiles by members of the commission who were sitting in the gallery at the time and the minister did not say anything, as if he did not know anything. Then the trouble started, because when people cannot go to the local offices and inquire about their claims trouble starts. The next thing that happened was the commission got a computer. It is a marvellous thing. It absorbs the information, but when the information does not prove to be accurate because of bad programming or lack of programming, I understand that the computer swallows the information, does not regurgitate it and it is just lost. Someone who ought to know said privately that the commission had