

Interim Supply

Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a few remarks, but if the hon. member for Kootenay East wishes to rise in his place and make a speech for me, or for himself, I will be glad to resume my seat and allow him to do so. It seems he is forever making interruptions from his seat.

Mr. Byrne: I would not want to make one of your speeches.

The Chairman: Order, please.

An hon. Member: He has no brains when he is on his feet.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Someone has said he has no brains when he is on his feet. Perhaps that is why he rarely stands up to make a speech.

An hon. Member: He has none, period.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Someone has now said that he has no brains, period.

Mr. Byrne: What do you say?

Mr. Horner (Acadia): I do not think he has shown any evidence of having brains since his coming to this house.

The Chairman: Order. May I invite the hon. member to forget the interruptions which greeted him at the commencement of his remarks.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a few words quietly and sincerely about a subject that has consumed a great deal of time in this chamber in the past few days.

A number of government members, as well as members on this side, have condemned the C.B.C. because of several of its programs. We are now being asked to vote one eighth or one ninth of total government spending for a period of two months. I am pleased to be a member of a party which suggested during the last interim supply debate that interim supply should be granted for a period of three months so we would not be called upon frequently to carry on debate on interim supply, thereby allowing this house to get on with more important business. Before that amount of money is passed by this committee I think hon. members in this chamber feel duty bound to comment on how the government is spending this money—whether it is being spent wisely, with caution and with scrutiny as recommended by the Glassco commission. Is this corporation paying attention to the recommendations of the Auditor General?

Mr. Chairman, this is the kind of question that entered my mind during this debate. A great deal of discussion has taken place regarding the C.B.C. I was a member of the last working broadcasting committee in 1959 and 1961. At that time I took a very active interest in the operations of this corporation. I must say that I was slightly shocked at the manner in which the corporation works. I am not witch hunting because of certain C.B.C. programs, but I am wondering about its general policies and its responsibility to parliament.

This parliament should not act as a censor of the C.B.C. Many programs are shown by the corporation which I do not enjoy. I am sure, however, that many other viewers appreciate that type of program, and I accept that fact. But I am concerned with the corporate structure of the C.B.C. and its relation and responsibility to parliament. The C.B.C. is a public body and should be responsible, through parliament, to the people of Canada.

During an early speech the Minister of Agriculture stated that the C.B.C. was spending more money than his whole department spent in aid to farmers in Canada. I do not know whether that is an accurate comparison, but I point it out to indicate the size of the corporation and its expenditures. A royal commission in the 1930's suggested that Canada needed a national network. The C.B.C. was established to create and operate a radio network system. Since that time this corporation has branched into the television field. Late in the 1950's the board of broadcast governors was established as a regulatory body. I think it was generally accepted at that time, as now, that such a regulatory body performs a useful function. However, I am concerned about the mammoth growth of this C.B.C. structure. There are no real controls over it in respect of expenditure. The corporation is supposed to bring forward a five year capital expansion program. I suppose it has done this, but I have yet to see any real, long range growth policy. The C.B.C. places its expansion program before treasury board and treasury board rules as to whether or not the corporation will receive the required amount of money. What is happening as a result of this procedure? This corporate structure is continuing to grow without aim or direction, and certainly without any controlling reins held by the elected representatives of the people.

I think the whole question of policy of the C.B.C. needs to be closely reconsidered. The