

Interim Supply

the government side, would be willing to waive the ordinary rules in order to make it possible to put these increases into effect.

I would hope that matters of this sort, such as veterans allowances and pensions, when they are dealt with in future will be taken care of in a manner different from what has been the case this session. I hope the procedure which has been followed here for so many years will be followed again and that the matter will be referred to the veterans affairs committee. I further hope that no matter what government is in power next year, further increases will be provided for our veterans, both in the matter of pensions and war veterans allowances; and I am quite sure that if this party takes over, which I have every hope it will, these increases will be put into effect.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I have hurriedly made a few notes, and I am not going to take the time of the house by repeating some of the excellent arguments already made by the member for Winnipeg North Centre and other members of this group on the importance of legislation with respect to the veterans, old age pensioners, blind pensioners and civilians who are disabled. I heartily support the remarks made by the member who has just taken his seat with particular respect to the necessity for improving the situation in some respects for the veterans and their dependents in this country.

I would like to take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the house one or two matters which are of very serious concern to some of my constituents. To date some 5,000 of my constituents have been denied satisfactory radio reception owing, in many cases, to the weakness of the signals. For this reason they cannot hear radio programs, Canadian or United States, at night. I have raised this matter repeatedly throughout the years in this house; I have taken it up with other members of the special committee established to study broadcasting in Canada; I have taken it up also with the chairman of the C.B.C. and with the district officers of the C.B.C. in Vancouver.

The chairman of the C.B.C. and his officials are fully aware of the situation, and they regret it exists. They have given me a most sympathetic hearing when I have attempted to put before them the views of my constituents with respect to the injustice they suffer. I have been told repeatedly that owing to the large requirements for television there are no funds available to see that these people have low-power relay stations that would provide all C.B.C. radio programs.

[Mr. Harkness.]

I was reading the report of the royal commission on broadcasting recently. I notice that the commission has dealt with this problem, and that it is not a problem which affects my constituency alone. A good number of people in various parts of Canada suffer this injustice, as I call it—and I say “injustice” because while others are able to obtain television they are still not able to obtain radio facilities—owing to some peculiar atmospheric condition or the topography of the country. I understand in the mountains it is very difficult to get strong signals over a great distance, so that there is a very shallow covering of earth over these rocks which also affects transmission.

On page 209 of the report the commission has this to say:

It came as something of a surprise to us that as much as 74 per cent of our total population is within reach of four or more radio stations during the daytime. At night, this percentage drops to about 43 per cent due to an increase in interference from distant co-channel and adjacent channel stations. The following table shows the percentages of population capable of hearing one, two, three or four or more Canadian radio stations.

At first glance, it would appear that radio coverage in Canada is very good. And indeed it is. Yet there are still almost half a million people in this country who cannot, except under freak atmospheric conditions, receive the signal of even one Canadian station.

I have quite a number of constituents in that group. The report continues.

After considering every aspect of this question with our financial advisers and C.B.C. management, we have come to the conclusion that a limited plan for the extension of radio coverage is desirable.

I am very pleased to see those recommendations. Then in another paragraph on page 210 the commission has this to say:

The most important single element in this plan is the erection of the 97 low-power relay transmitters and the four new transmitters which is contemplated in our six-year forecast at a total capital cost of nearly \$2 million. These new facilities, particularly the low-power relay transmitters, are to be located in remote areas of every province except Prince Edward Island which, for obvious reasons, does not give rise to as difficult problems as her sister provinces. The over-all capital investment in the extension plan will be about \$3.3 million including a contingency of \$1 million to provide for future growth and shifts in population.

I do hope that as a result of this report the government will give relief to the half million Canadians who have been denied satisfactory radio reception to date by installing the necessary high-power transmitters or low-power relay stations that are required. In my district they are required at points on Kootenay lake, Slocan lake and the Arrow lakes.

This is a district which is producing, as a matter of fact, the highest family income per capita in Canada; and many of these