

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES QUESTION

(QUESTION NO. 1922)


Approved

MR STEWART asked the Minister for Post and Telecommunications, upon notice, on 12 September 1978:

- (1) Are all programs for the Special Broadcasting Service produced and presented by voluntary workers.
- (2) Do broadcasters have any legal status or contract.
- (3) Does the special broadcasting station acquire the copyright of all material broadcast.
- (4) Can broadcasters be dismissed by decision of the station management; if so, is there any right of appeal and with whom can the appeal be lodged.
- (5) Does the station management have legislative, executive and judicial powers over broadcasters.
- (6) Will the Government introduce immediate amendments to the Special Broadcasting Service provisions of the Broadcasting and Television Act to (a) grant the right of appeal to an independent authority by the broadcaster/person dismissed, (b) ensure that a broadcaster/person can only be dismissed for misconduct and (c) ensure that minor complaints against broadcast co-ordinators or other persons, be heard in the presence of at least 2 other parties.

MR STALEY - The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Special Broadcasting Service currently contracts broadcasting groups to provide programs in languages other than English. These groups are comprised of volunteer broadcasters. Groups are paid at the rate of \$55 per hour, with the money being distributed within the group according to the contribution of each individual. In addition, members of the staff of the SBS broadcast on some language programs as well as in English language segments.
- (2) Yes - but the contract is with a group, not with individuals.
- (3) Yes
- (4) Yes - No formal procedure but appeals can be made to the Chairman and Members of the Special Broadcasting Service as distinct from station management.
- (5) No.
- (6) The officers of the SBS are aware of the unusual status of the volunteer broadcasters who work on 2EA and 3EA and the Service is currently considering a revision of policy, in conjunction with its advisory body, the National Ethnic Broadcasting Advisory Council. When a new policy is formulated it will be designed to regularise the relationship between the SBS and its broadcasters and should contain adequate provision for appeals against administrative decisions.