

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Jacques-L. Trudel (Montréal-Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary.

If there are few projects left at this time, could the minister say when he expects tabling the final report in the House?

Mr. Pelletier: Very shortly, Mr. Speaker.

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[English]

BROADCASTING**POLICY ON ISSUANCE OF LICENCES TO AGENTS OF CROWN IN PROVINCES**

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, June 3, I asked the Prime Minister whether there had been any change in federal policy on the issuing of broadcasting licences. In view of the Prime Minister's earlier reply to a question this morning relating to social and income security policy, to the effect that all provinces should be treated equally, can the Prime Minister explain the difference and distinction between federal policy in the issuing of broadcasting licences to agents in right of a province, and how that licencing policy applies to educational institutions compared with cablevision stations?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again the Chair will allow the Prime Minister to reply briefly to the hon. member, but when the hon. member invites a member of the government to explain why such and such a situation exists he is really inviting a statement which normally ought to be made on motions. The hon. member at that point is not seeking information but is rather inviting a debate or argument back and forth between himself and the minister responsible. I always hesitate to make these interjections because they take so much time. It might be easier to say nothing and allow the Prime Minister to reply. However, I have again tried to make the point, and I suggest to the Prime Minister that he might reply briefly to the hon. member's question.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to the situation he described in his question some days ago, I understand that the purchase was not by any government, but mainly by insurance companies. Therefore it is a private purchase. As to the matter of licence and permit, there has been none issued. Of course they will appear before the CRTC, as everyone else does, and then we will see what the decision is.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your earlier admonition about argumentative questions, but on a point of order before I come to my supplementary may I point out that questions do become argumentative when answers are perhaps not responsive to earlier questions—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is not a point of order, and the hon. member could not know what the reply would be when he asked the question.

Mr. Nowlan: Oh, yes, I did.

[Mr. Pelletier.]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Nowlan: I did know.

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. member, in any event, return to the matter and ask a question rather than rise on a point of order.

Mr. Nowlan: I will return to the supplementary, but I know the answer to the question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should understand that he is given the floor for the purpose of asking a question. If we get involved in points of order and questions of privilege we lose quite a bit of time. However, I have no objection to the hon. member asking a supplementary.

Mr. Nowlan: On a question of privilege before I come to the supplementary, Your Honour implied that I was perhaps being a little facetious in saying I knew the answer of the Prime Minister before he gave it. In my original question I deliberately referred to the answer of the Prime Minister on June 3 when he said, among other things;

I do not believe the sale to which the hon. member refers is in any way an encroachment—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will not allow the hon. member to continue further on a question of privilege or point of order. It is as simple as that. He has been recognized for the purpose of asking a question. He has the same rights as all other members of the House. His right at the present time is to ask a question, and supplementaries if he wants to. I would be quite prepared and delighted to allow him to ask supplementaries.

Mr. Nowlan: I will not pursue the matter at this moment but I thank Your Honour—Your Grace—for the privilege of asking a supplementary. Without trespassing too far, but because this is a most important question which could have been raised on the constitutional issue—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: This is my question, if some of those opposite will listen including, I hope, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State.

An hon. Member: We are on pins and needles.

Mr. Nowlan: In view of the application now before the CRTC as of May 31, set out in part as an application by Caisse de Dépôt et Placement du Québec—I guess that is the Quebec Deposit and Investment Fund—which under section 4 of the act is set out as an agent of the Crown in the right of the province. Will the Secretary of State please explain to me or to the House how the Prime Minister can say that there has been no encroachment on federal policies on the issuing of broadcasting licences when the directive of his government on June 4, 1970, says that no such licence shall be issued to any agent of