

Telesat Canada Act

rejected. It seems very important to me that we have this information relating to the cost-benefit analysis of the satellite system. It is important that members have this information because there have been contradictory estimates as to the cost of this satellite system.

I recognize that a new amendment was introduced which limits private investor participation to a maximum of 2½ per cent. My only comment in that regard is "big deal". The previous limit was 5 per cent. This limited private participants to 40. The new limit of 2½ per cent will restrict this number to 80. It seems to me that this does not really make any essential change in the legislation. It still means that the economic elite of Canadian society will be the ones who will participate in the satellite system.

There are further implications regarding this development involving the Sidbec trust venture and the participation of Bell Canada as the main carrier. We also must consider Bell's subsidiary, Northern Electric. Northern Electric is one of the two main contractors developing this satellite system. We are witnessing a power play by these carriers. There are other people who are participating in the system, but there is a substantial conflict of interest in respect of this legislation and the policies which have to be developed after it has been put into operation.

It seems to me that the government with its one-third ownership will not have control over the operation and development of the system, thus increasing the monopoly power of the communications industry by allowing it to participate in the scheme. In dealing with the question of public ownership and making this corporation a crown operation, I think I should refer to statements which were made by the Minister of Communications when he was the Minister of Revenue in the Quebec government. I am referring to the Sidbec operation established in Quebec. He gave some reasons in support of the idea that it should be a public operation. He stated on one occasion:

The whole emphasis behind Sidbec was to create something that did not exist in Quebec, an integrated steel mill to give a boost and to have a multiplier effect on the economy.

I recognize that this is an economic argument with social implications. I suggest there is an even better reason for the operation we are now considering being a public corporation. We are dealing basically with social and political objectives. It seems to me that hon.

members must consider very carefully the decision they make on this amendment.

As I pointed out, there are a number of precedents in Canadian history which show that a variety of courses of action have been taken in dealing with new technological development. The people of Canada do not want to see the same thing happen. They do not want a repetition of what we have witnessed in the past. The proposal put forward by the government tends to move in this direction. Surely it is a step in the same direction. We do not want the policy which existed in the past. We want a new policy which is geared to the needs of today and tomorrow. In my view the objectives of our society for today and tomorrow can only be properly fulfilled by the establishment of this satellite as a crown corporation operating in the public interest and for the benefit of the people of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Dumont (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, having seriously looked into this Act to establish a Canadian corporation for telecommunication by satellite, we do hope, in this corner of the house, that the minister will not confuse the issues as he is doing at the Post Office and in the Communications Department.

As far as the socialists' amendment is concerned, we realize once again that they want everything to be state-run. However, since the state cannot work wonders, I would rather ask them to live this wonderful feat performed by the minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) who is trying to show us Heaven from another angle, because, since the post office affair, I think the minister is convinced that Hell is red.

At the outset, I would like to say that we have in Canada today, and especially in Quebec, thousands of centres that do not yet receive communications through the ordinary channels of the C.B.C. or other networks, because a television cable was refused, for example, to the citizens of Saint-Ferdinand-d'Halifax, who does not receive the programs of the C.B.C. This village is located 30 miles from Quebec City. This is clear proof that when we have public corporations, the bureaucracy they impose cannot dispense good services, since the request a citizen of Saint-Ferdinand-d'Halifax sent a year ago has not yet been answered. And so these good people do not receive the Canadian message they have a right to, because the C.B.C. has become too bureaucratic.