

The Chairman: Either one. Right.

Mr. Boucher: In our case I think when you start dissecting how come people with antennas watch fewer American programmes and there is an increase of viewers watching American programmes with their own cable—what statistics don't indicate is why they are on cable in the first place.

Assuming they would have no cable in that community and they are all receiving their programmes on rooftop antennas, you would find that the people who subscribe to cable first are those who were watching more American programmes in the first place.

When you make a small sampling and go to a home and find why they bought cable in the first place, you might find it was because their antenna got rusty—but they were still watching American programmes.

Of course in reply to your original question whether I am concerned or not—I am concerned. I would be very concerned if we were detrimental to the identity of Canada but I do not think this is happening.

By my statement earlier I feel the opposite way. We are Canadians, we have the opportunity to compare. We have had the opportunity to choose more freely a way of life here and I think in that sense if we have gotten to appreciate why we are Canadians or Canada more quickly as a result of being exposed to the States I think it is doing a marvellous job.

The Chairman: I am not sure I follow that statement.

Senator Prowse: It is really easy.

The Chairman: It may be. I am not sure I understand it.

Mr. Chaston: I think it would be wrong to conclude from the statement which you read from our brief that it is the intention of this industry to inundate Canada with American signals.

What this says is that Canadians have subscribed to cable in order to "receive clearly the signals of U.S. stations." Most of them subscribing to our systems could already get them before. All we have done is provide them with a cleaner signal, a clearer signal, and one they could have provided themselves had they put up higher antennas or more sophisticated equipment.

Mr. Allard: This is pointed out at page 36 of our brief.

Senator McElman: Mr. Chairman, perhaps in the time left to us we could move beyond actual programming to the technical prospects for the future.

We have had the Bushnell group and Mr. Griffiths has expressed his views on what the future holds.

You have referred at page 56 of your brief to what you believe to be a possibility that some television broadcasters may choose to close down their transmitters and feed their signals directly to the cable system.

As a matter of fact Mr. Loader is quoted as saying that cable will replace the broadcast stations in heavy populated areas as a means of distributing electronic news information and entertainment.

Then at page 62 you envisage CATV hooking the public into computers, libraries and so on.

At page 63 you give what you suggest is an alternative where like the telephone you will simply dial the channel or type of programming you want.

Could you elaborate in this general area and paint for us a picture of what you actually do see as the immediate or near future and the far future of cable?

Mr. Boucher: Well, Senator, I am glad you said the "near future" and the "far future" because I would also add the "visions" as Stu Griffiths amply pointed out. If you want a vision that is it.

Senator McElman: Let us look at the near practical approaches.

Mr. Boucher: First of all immediately there are limitations to development.

Firstly any change or any departure from the present concept, such as offering many more channels and especially the switch concept where you dial a programme—we are talking about millions if not billions of dollars, to institute the hardware that is necessary.

Again we are dependant on the public acceptance and their ability to afford it to make this practical. For the very reason I was mentioning earlier about spiralling of receipts, the fact is that if the service becomes too expensive, so that people cannot afford it, then of course, you have a downward spiral. This is a major obstacle. I think this is one that must be overcome first.

For the next years I think most of us agree that while there will be the same amount of