

*Government Orders*

matter, but my concern is that the legal interpretation of it may be that inside wiring could be looked at as an exempt transmission facility and therefore BC Tel would be quite within its rights to say it is no longer responsible for providing it.

What would that do? To make the matter simple, it would substantially increase costs for the residential consumer. That is not in the spirit of where I want to see the legislation go. We have to protect local services and the provision of those local services, particularly so in our rural and more isolated northern communities.

That is why I have made the suggestion that the words input and output in terms of exempt transmission apparatus be struck from the current clause. Without those definitions it makes the case a little more difficult for the telecoms to say under the new legislation that they are no longer restricted to providing basic service into the residence itself.

I hope the government and our friends in the other opposition party would see fit to endorse this proposal. I simply think it protects the interests of consumers.

**Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to my colleague from Okanagan—Shuswap. He referred to the potential for escaping the cost of installing services within apartment buildings or installations that normally were covered by Bell Canada or BC Tel. I presumed there were normal costs of doing business that are chargeable to the customer and there were those that were not through precedent, through CRTC decisions or through a variety of ways since the founding of the CRTC some 20 years to 25 years ago.

• (1550)

If his observations on the potential meaning of the words input and output in that sense are accurate, I have no difficulty supporting him. They presuppose that there will be a saving to the consumer of the service. One of the goals under clause 7 or one of the objectives of this bill is to ensure that notwithstanding the market force the consumer shall be protected along the way.

I must say I had an entirely different understanding of the meaning of the clause on exempt transmission

apparatus. It related to the fact that the Government of Canada through the minister made a decision with respect to making absolutely sure the resellers would not be entrapped by the bill. The goal of the bill was not to cover resellers, that is those who were renting facilities and did not have facility bases. They would not fall under the mandate of the CRTC in any way, shape or form.

In the prior bill there was nothing clearly defining the fact the resellers were exempt. The CRTC and the resellers were of the view that we could go the exemption route for the resellers by having this responsibility under the powers of exemption and forbearance of the CRTC. We could have left the definition section alone. Maybe they were right. Maybe they were wrong. Only time will tell.

The department and the minister undertook to include five new definitions, enlarging definitions or motions. They included the definition of an exempt transmission apparatus within which they used the term intelligence that does not have any meaning in law. Therefore they had to define intelligence. Then they enlarged the definition of telecommunications to include the word intelligence to be found in any wire, cable, optical or other electromagnetic system. Further they enlarged the definition of transmission facility so there was no question wired cable and optical was there for the transmission of intelligence between network termination points.

That was key to deciding whether or not one was going to be a reseller or would end up falling under the same regulatory network as Bell Canada. There had to be network termination points, et cetera, to be exempt. They then went on to define network termination points.

Within the broad scope of the amendment my colleague submitted, perhaps there is a variety of interpretations to explain why we felt it was important some time in the foreseeable future. We picked the date of five years. The minister seemed to feel a shorter time or even a longer time might be indicated and did not give us a precise time.

There is much that is new in the bill. Just today, not 10 minutes ago, I listened to my colleague raise the matter of input and output. That indicated to me there was something unclear in the bill and perhaps it is a good idea to tighten it up. I thought it had to do with a