

*Supply—Transport*

**Mr. Aiken:** Am I mistaken in the belief that two adjacent channels should not be owned by the same interests? I always thought that this was a factor taken into consideration by the B.B.G. in its decisions and that it would not give television licences in respect of adjoining areas to the same individual.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The hon. gentleman has just asked a question I intended to answer without its being asked. I have always felt, and as the right hon. gentleman has said I do not hide my views, that in any kind of business it is better to have a number of businesses than just one. I have always felt that a concentration, particularly of the ownership of newspapers, radio stations and television stations, is not in itself desirable. However, the whole history of television in Canada and of radio broadcasting before it has shown that, notwithstanding the pious observations made in a number of speeches and notwithstanding the rather loosely worded regulation which the hon. gentleman quoted in the 25 or 30 years I have watched these things, there has always been multiple ownership in Canada, which has been steadily on the increase.

• (5:20 p.m.)

The Southam interests, for example, own several stations and so do other large newspaper chains. Thomson owns I do not know how many. I think it would be preferable not to have any more multiple ownership than is necessary but I am informed that this is a very difficult and technical business and there are not too many totally independent operators who have been able to go into it and be successful. The Board of Broadcast Governors has always taken the view, I think, that they would never recommend the ownership of two stations in the same place by the same person.

**Mr. Smith:** Mr. Chairman, I would point out that these will be two stations in the same broadcasting area with the same ownership.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** If that view was taken by the Board of Broadcast Governors that would be the end of it. But we are now seeking to try to anticipate a decision about an application that may never even get before the board. That is the actual, factual situation. The application is still in the Department of Transport. It is still being studied by the experts and if they say this thing will not

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work, it cannot be done, it is going to create problems of a technical nature, that will be the end of it.

If the Board of Broadcast Governors says, Notwithstanding the fact—this is the other point I wanted to make—that it may be technically feasible we do not think there should be a third channel in Toronto at this time, that will also be the end of it. I will now deal with the point raised by the right hon. gentleman regarding the point made by the hon. member for Cumberland the other day, which I dealt with as clearly as I could at the time. By “alternate service” I have always understood is meant the provision of a second station, either a C.B.C. station or a private station, where there is a first station. I had never understood “alternate service” to mean the extension of the area covered by the use of satellites and, in fact, it certainly has not been interpreted that way because a good many satellites have been established since the freeze was put on alternate service.

Taking the ordinary meaning of the words, I would not regard as alternate service the provision of a third service somewhere when there was already alternate service. The Board of Broadcast Governors may take an opposite view. However, Mr. Chairman, that has been my understanding of the matter. I do not know whether this covers all the points raised by the right hon. gentleman but I have tried to deal with them as coolly and as factually as I can.

**Mr. Coates:** Mr. Chairman, would the minister answer one question?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Yes, certainly.

**Mr. Coates:** Could he give the committee some indication when the new appointments to the Board of Broadcast Governors will be made and whether these will be made prior to the consideration of this application, if it is put before the Board of Broadcast Governors, or later?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I am really quite embarrassed by this question, Mr. Chairman, because that matter does not fall within my responsibility as Minister of Transport. The Board of Broadcast Governors answers to this house through the Secretary of State. I know some consideration has been given to making these appointments but I think it would be wrong of me to try to forecast what one of my colleagues is going to do in a matter that has not yet been determined.