

*Oral Questions*

The job of the government is to make policy. It was for that reason we were elected. It is the job of the CRTC to implement policy. It is for that reason it was created.

We have tabled a direction in the House which is part of a parliamentary process. It sets out a policy which is in favour of competition and in favour of consumers. Consumers have asked for leadership. That is what we are providing.

If the Bloc Quebecois or the Reform Party would like to suggest either that the direction be withdrawn and that the monopoly created by the exemption order remain or that the direction be amended, let us hear their suggestions.

The direction is on the table of the House. It is an open, transparent and public process. We are looking for good policy. Let us hear what the opposition has to suggest.

[Translation]

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, obviously these excellent arguments failed to convince the chairman of the CRTC who knows the subject inside out.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Bouchard:** My question was about the integrity of this government, and the custodian of the government's integrity, the person who is ultimately responsible for the government's integrity is the leader of the government. My question is directed to the Prime Minister, and I want to ask him to explain how he can claim that his government followed normal procedures in this case and acted with integrity, when we know that the orders were tailor made for Power DirecTv in which his son-in-law has an interest?

[English]

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition chooses to confuse policy with accusations that have nothing to do with reality.

Let me remind him again that the origin of the issue was the issuance of an exemption order which effectively created a monopoly in the direct to home satellite sector.

Let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition exactly why the exemption order was created in the first place in the bill proposed by the former government.

• (1420)

The explanatory note says that an exemption order exists as part of the technology neutral approach of the act. An example of a service which is technically broadcasting but which the commission would probably want to exempt is real estate radio.

What we have here is the use of the exemption order by the CRTC to authorize the entry into a very major component of the

broadcasting service in the country of direct to home satellite broadcasting.

It was never anticipated that an exemption order would be used for such a purpose. It is entirely appropriate that the government seek a transparent method of looking at the means of licensing and recognizing the entry into the market in this important sector.

[Translation]

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I pity the CRTC! Someone is responsible for defending the government's integrity: it is the Prime Minister, and he is not saying a word. Someone is responsible for defending the CRTC in this House; he is not saying a word, and the Minister of Industry is trying to cover for these people. He is getting involved in something that is none of his business.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Bouchard:** I will give the Prime Minister another chance to act responsibly on this issue. I want to ask him how he can continue to claim he did nothing out of the ordinary and that the matter is being dealt with, when Expressvu, the competing consortium which had agreed to comply with the CRTC's criteria, has already made it clear that it would challenge the cabinet directives in the courts and that the CRTC will refuse to implement orders it feels are unlawful and also plans to bring this matter before the courts.

[English]

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, throughout this issue the Prime Minister has acted with the utmost integrity by withdrawing himself from any discussion concerning it.

The government's objective is to establish a competitive environment in this important sector. Apparently there are plenty of legal opinions floating around. The hon. member knows very well that lawyers can be found to give opinions from virtually any point of view.

However, in this case we are confident we are acting entirely within the authority we have within the act. We have created a process that is open and transparent. We are seeking a policy that is pro competition and pro consumer.

Again I say to the Leader of the Opposition that if he has a suggestion to make on how the policy ought to be shaped, if he wishes us to listen to protect one particular interest, we will hear him.

**The Speaker:** I urge hon. members to make the questions direct and the answers a little shorter.