

suggest other measures that will provide further improvement. I can assure them all that I will be willing to take into consideration any further suggestions they might want to put forward.

When considering this Bill for second reading, Sir, I would ask Hon. Members to keep in mind that this Bill is designed to maintain the excellent telephone system that has evolved over many years. At the same time, it is designed to allow the Bell group of companies to freely pursue a wide range of unregulated activities, both in Canada and internationally. I look forward to the work of the committee.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[Translation]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 66, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier)—Official languages—(a) Request that legislation be introduced. (b) Content of amending legislation; the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi)—Multiculturalism—Canadian Multiculturalism Council—(a) Request for resignation of Vice-Chairman. (b) Request for investigation; the Hon. Member for Parkdale—High Park (Mr. Witer)—Human rights—Violations in U.S.S.R.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BELL CANADA ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Island) that Bill C-13, an Act respecting the reorganization of Bell Canada, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister for her comments on our Committee's activities, and I hope the same spirit of solidarity and interest in the subject at hand will be maintained, especially of our telecommunications system and how it affects Mr. and Mrs. Average Canadian.

• (1620)

[English]

Bill C-13, an Act respecting the reorganization of Bell Canada, has three objectives. First, to assure the CRTC's ability to carry out efficient monitoring and control of our

Bell Canada Act

regulated monopoly telephone system, Bell Canada. Second, to ensure fair and reasonable rates for subscribers with ongoing universal, affordable service to all users within Bell's area of operation. Third, to ensure that the regulation of Bell Canada allows it to grow to meet the challenge of the new technological era in which it finds itself, while not unduly impeding the profitability of Bell Canada Enterprises, its new parent. I believe the Minister acknowledged that to be an important aspect of the relationship as well.

Unfortunately the Bill, in its present form, does not ensure that any of those three objectives will be attained. The Bill contains major flaws. Its passage will not ensure fairness for Bell subscribers and may even facilitate unfair competition with our broadcasting industry. I bring to the Minister's attention that I expressed this concern when the Bill last came to the House as Bill C-19, when it went to committee and came back into the House. It is an ongoing concern not only of mine but of the broadcasting industry. I hope she will, as she has said, be open to an amendment in this regard. It is most regrettable that the Bill does not reflect the views widely expressed during the time when broad consultations took place.

Before embarking on an analysis of Bill C-13, it may be useful to review the legislative history which led to its introduction. In view of the importance of the Bell group of companies and the potential impact its corporate reorganization could have, the CRTC was directed on October 25, 1982, by the then Minister responsible, Francis Fox, to conduct an inquiry under Section 50 of the National Transportation Act into Bell Canada's proposed reorganization under the CBCA. The CRTC was directed to report its findings by March 31, 1983, so that the Government could take them into account in its over-all analysis of the reorganization. The Liberal Government also called for consultation hearings to be open to all interested persons. We were always a Government open and interested in consulting with other people before we took action.

Mr. Fox indicated that the general form of the reorganization was consistent with the Liberal Government's attitude toward increased competition and industrial development in the high-tech telecommunications sector. He stressed that the Government had been indicating for some time that all Canadian companies should make changes to enable them to be competitive, both here at home and in foreign markets. He said:

The Bell Canada group of companies forms a vital part of the telecommunications sector in Canada.

While Bell Canada is most readily identified with the provision of telephone services in Quebec and Ontario, the Bell group is also involved in many other activities. The most major corporate reorganization of this important group of companies is obviously of great interest to the Government.

He pointed out that the proposed reorganization had raised questions and concerns regarding the impact on Bell subscribers and on the ability of the CRTC to continue to regulate Bell's monopoly in the provision of telecommunication services.