

Telesat Canada Act

I am not saying that I would argue with the minister about that. I know there are advantages, and I think important advantages, especially in the realm of industrial innovation, in putting up our own satellite. But I am wondering—and I got no inkling from the minister's speech—how far we are going with this technological nationalism. Are we going into the field of doing our own launching? I realize people knowledgeable in this field recently suggested this could indeed be done, and perhaps there are also opportunities for industrial innovation in Canada if we do move into that field. I do not want to oversimplify a field that I do not find simple by any means, but perhaps some of the arguments that apply to the vehicle itself might well apply to taking a look also at the launching process.

I am still wondering what the cost is going to be to the Canadian people. Will it be \$30 million, or \$70 million? What is the involvement of the government of Canada both in control and in cost? This is an important venture. I heard the minister on one occasion liken it to the building of railways, and when he did that he frightened me a little because I know what happened in this country as past governments became involved, voluntarily or otherwise, in the railway building process. I looked back over *Hansards* of some years ago to read about figures produced by ministers from the same party as the Minister of Communications indicating the involvement of the Canadian government in the building of railways, and these were very, very minor compared with the actual bills which came in some years later.

After all these months of study and consultation, and despite the too frequent areas of flexibility and uncertainty in the minister's speech, I hope that we do know where we are going in this field. I hope this project will not be another *Bonaventure* or National Centre for the Performing Arts. To have a Canadian satellite is worth a lot. It is worth a lot to stimulate Canada's scientific and technological initiative, and I think the people of Canada are prepared for that. There is a general feeling in the country that this is a move that we should make. But let us have a reasonable degree of confidence that this time the figures are realistic and that we are not heading down a path that will prove far, far more costly than we thought when we entered upon it. Therefore, I appeal to the minister in this whole process not to devalue the aspect of cost that is involved.

The minister also mentioned the question of majority shareholding. I read in the *Ottawa Citizen* this afternoon that the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Schreyer) was going to bring this up. I also read what the minister was going to say. However, there is no indication that I was going to say anything, and if this happens to me again I will cut off my subscription! I am not convinced that 51 per cent would not have been a workable, reasonable, indeed proper figure.

I am interested, too, in some of the things the Governor in Council can do under this bill. Indeed, the common carriers have referred to this aspect. The Governor in Council may delete the name of any corporation from schedule A on the ground that the corporation is no longer an approved telecommunications common carrier. However, I can find nothing in the bill that provides any avenue of appeal against such decision. Can these corporations be ticked off as easily as that? Is there a comeback? Clause 44 (4) provides no appeal, either; there could be some pretty high-handed operations here. These are matters on which I want to hear more elucidation.

One aspect of the legislation that disturbed me was the lack of regulatory authority. The minister did touch on that in the latter portion of his speech when he said that if the satellite were in orbit and operating now, the Radio Act would provide the necessary regulations. I wonder what Mr. Pickersgill will say when he reads that. As our legislation stands now, he might have the lingering thought that he has a role to play there too. I think that here the legislation is not as thorough as that which was passed in the Congress of the United States setting up COMSAT. I know we do not have a body quite like the F.C.C. But, I am impressed with the thought the people to the south have given to this matter. Surely, the regulation of a body such as is to be set up is of the utmost importance. We will watch this aspect as well. The silence in the bill on this regulatory aspect has caused me some anxiety which has been alleviated only in a limited way by what the minister said tonight. I am glad he said what he did on this particular aspect. There is much in the bill which makes it look as if the corporation or company—to use that expression—is a business. It is not a crown corporation and not a government department. It is a business. It strikes me that it is too much like a business run by the cabinet or the minister.