

*Telesat Canada Act*

with whom the minister has had many discussions, are prepared, having seen this legislation, to say, publicly what they obviously have said to the *Globe and Mail*, I am wondering about the public with whom no consultations have taken place. For this reason I come back to the importance of broadening the area of testimony and consultation in the committee. Again, I suggest that this should be regarded as a hybrid bill.

The potential shareholders will surely have many inquiries to make. For a long time some of us have been asking about the MacIntosh report. Here is a very competent man, an economist, a scholar and a banker, who has looked into this whole question. We expected to read what Dr. MacIntosh thought. Now we find that his report is not to be made available. But, surely, he will come before the committee, and allow Members of Parliament, the public and potential investors to draw upon his incomparable knowledge and thorough research so that all may better understand this important piece of legislation. This is one thing to which I am looking forward. I am very anxious to hear from Dr. MacIntosh partly, perhaps, because I am not at all satisfied by the reasons given for not revealing his report.

Although I planned to make only a cursory set of comments there are some points which come to mind. First, the bill strikes me as one which gives immense authority and power to the government, to the minister. As I read it over, every so often I ran across something like this: "the company shall not, except under the direction of the minister—" do so and so. And when I finally came to the clause setting up the board of directors there seemed very little left for the board to do.

Mr. Speaker, there are many boards of directors of companies operating with great success in this country which would not countenance for a moment the limitations placed upon the board of directors here. In this case, directors are circumscribed in so many ways that it seems they do not have the ordinary discretionary powers usually given. I wonder, too, just what is to be the role of parliament in reference to this company. What will the place of parliament be when the company, like the satellite, is launched? Will there be even the kind of tenuous association we have with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation? I was impressed by the statement that it is not to be a Crown corporation. It is to be something different. It is not to be an agent of Her Majesty or a

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

Crown corporation under the meaning of the Financial Administration Act. It is, then, to be something else—something which we must analyse.

● (8:30 p.m.)

I was interested, also, in the potential role of the provincial governments, if any. This satellite company will be involved in the management of an important educational vehicle, if I may use that word. I do not know whether it is quite so simple as the Ministers of Education think. They seem to believe that a satellite is like a blackboard in the sky; nevertheless, it will have educational opportunities and ramifications. Will the provinces feel that this might be an area of functional federalism? Might it appear, as one looks over schedule A and sees the list of approved telecommunications common carriers noting that some of them are in fact owned by provincial governments, that we will have a situation where some provinces get a voice indirectly, or a piece of the control, which is denied other provinces? Are we building in here a source of future irritation and misunderstanding? I think this question should be reflected upon too.

The minister commented that the proportions to be held by each of the three could not be set forth precisely. While I have the greatest respect for his business success and competence, I find myself not quite persuaded that it would not have been wiser to be more precise and definite. The minister indicates there will be a rough range, and that there will not be much deviation therefrom. It would seem not too difficult to declare that a certain percentage will be held by one group and another percentage by the other two.

Surely, it is not impossible to write such a provision into the legislation. Surely, in the discussions with the common carriers some rough calculations must have been made. And surely from those rough calculations it would not be too difficult a step to set out some precise percentage in the legislation.

I have been reading the projected costs, I sometimes felt endlessly over these many months, and the minister has his figures down pretty compactly. I had read nothing before that led me to believe that his figures, even for a compact satellite, were in actuality likely to be realistic. I notice the minister is not taking up the option of a United States built model at the kind of rate that no Canadian automobile purchaser would ever get, namely a better vehicle at a lower price!