

Oral Questions

discussions with some of the concerned citizens from the west end of Vancouver on this very important matter. As the hon. member points out so correctly to this House, they have indicated that their neighbourhood is in the process of being destroyed and that action must be taken to stop this intent.

I understand that representations have been made to the provincial government of British Columbia, which is concerned with the law enforcement provisions. Our department has this matter under very active consideration at this time. It is a matter of very grave concern to our government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

CRIMINAL CODE PROVISIONS

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also addressed to the acting minister who, of course, as the justice minister, has failed to bring forward any answers. This is not an issue of provincial jurisdiction or municipal jurisdiction; it is strictly federal, and it should be on next week's agenda.

In the past the justice minister has said that the opposition to changes in the Criminal Code comes from women's groups. Would he please tell the House which women's groups have indicated that they oppose measures which would deliver the residential neighbourhood of the west end back to the people who live there and away from the prostitutes and pimps who now control it?

Mr. Jim Peterson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): The question, Madam Speaker, refers to the statements previously made by the minister. I am not aware of those statements, and because he is not in the House I therefore cannot respond to them. However, I do wish to reiterate the fact that our government and the minister are concerned about this situation, and will be taking measures.

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COMMUNICATIONS

RECEPTION OF TELEVISION SIGNALS VIA FOREIGN SATELLITES

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications who will know that yesterday the government just lost its second case relating to the unauthorized reception of foreign signals from foreign satellites, with the result that the government's communications policy is left in tatters in that area. What is he going to do next?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I would like to point out, first of all, that this is a prosecution which was not launched by the government, as such, but by the CRTC.

Obviously, it is a question of importance. While I am most sympathetic to the desires of the residents of Newfoundland to

receive PBS, as are many hundreds of thousands of Canadians, and I think we must find some way of seeing that they do receive this type of signal, the decision itself will undoubtedly be appealed, once we have had the opportunity of examining it because, if the initial reports that have come to me are correct, it has far-reaching implications.

The implication would be that any cable undertaking in this country could simply bring in whatever signals it wanted from American satellites and rebroadcast them over the Canadian system. That, in itself, may not be an unfortunate result, when one is looking at the PBS system, but there are a number of other signals on the American satellites, and the proliferation of such signals would endanger the continued existence of the Canadian broadcasting system as we know it. There are a number of other signals which are perhaps not as desirable as the PBS signals. I could mention the three pornographic channels that exist at the moment on American satellites.

POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, the minister will be aware that the FCC in the United States is deregulating and is prepared to liberalize its policy with regard to international reception of signals. Second, he will be aware that provincial governments have called upon him to begin negotiations with the United States to allow for the reciprocal reception of signals off each other's satellites. Third, he will be aware of the fact that the Therrien Committee, chaired by a member of the federal government's CRTC, recommended exactly that.

Is he now prepared to open discussions with the United States to allow for reciprocal reception of at least a limited number of each country's satellite programs?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, our interest, of course, is in seeing to it that all Canadians receive access to approximately the same number of signals no matter where they live in the country. The major initiative in that regard was taken last year when the CRTC authorized the CanCom organization, which is headquartered in Whitehorse, which is in the riding of the hon. member's House leader. That system itself is making available on satellite four television signals right across Canada—one from a Vancouver station, one from an Edmonton station, one from a Hamilton station, and another one which is basically a French language station—plus eight radio signals. Therefore, vast progress has been made in a very short period of time, making a larger number of signals available to Canadians in every part of the country.

On the question of extending what is commonly known as the three plus one rule, which is really the only subject of discussion at this moment, I do not believe that anyone in this House would want to argue that we should have a completely open sky policy in this country and that we should allow all Canadian cable companies, for instance, to rebroadcast every signal that is available off air or coming in from the United States satellites. On the question of three plus one, we have