

Railway Act

for going into orbit for the first time, I think, as a sort of custodian or guardian angel of the Railway Act. I have watched with interest the expansion of his empire as, by order in council, those responsibilities which heretofore were held by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) have come under his careful scrutiny.

I suppose it is only proper that the empire of the Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans) should be expanded, because after all he has done so remarkably well in the Post Office Department that he should be given greater opportunities to serve and to expedite! I did not realize how ambitious were his plans for new empires until I returned to the precincts of Parliament Hill this fall, when on visiting the men's room outside the door to this chamber I discovered that about a fourth of the floor space had been pre-empted. When I asked about this I was told it was to be the new domain of the Minister of Communications. So, the expansion is indeed physical as well as intellectual and jurisdictional.

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The information is false.

Mr. Macquarrie: I have been corrected, Mr. Speaker, and I stand corrected. As I stand crowded in the future I will remember that it is not this minister but the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) who is responsible. I should not have been building for the Minister of Communications a larger empire than he has; I should have known better than to think that he needed help from me in that particular regard.

At some time we will be looking forward to what is supposed to be in the wind, a confrontation of Imperia between those who are supposed to be the consuls of the new Information Canada empire—the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) and the Minister of Communications. This confrontation will be extremely interesting.

On looking at Bill C-11 I thought it was very straightforward and innocuous, not a piece of legislation that would evoke a great deal of wide ranging discussion. But never has so seemingly a straightforward and innocuous piece of legislation evoked such an explosion of ideational projection as that which has just been delivered. I suppose that old habits die hard. It is said that once you learn to write you never forget. I suppose once you learn to sky-write you never forget that either, and the minister is an expert at sky-writing. He has expertise in his office,

and perhaps there are some appropriate speeches left over. Who knows what opportunities must be seized to make use of them?

I had not expected that in this legislation the minister would find an opportunity to expatiate upon the telecommission or Telesat. I thought he might more likely have told us about his own "Dial a Message" service which he inaugurated, perhaps anticipating the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) in this regard. When the minister finally got to the legislation, I think he said nothing to which I would find serious reason for taking exception. I think this is just a piecemeal beginning.

As we mentioned to the minister many times during the past session, there is a crying need for a more thorough going operation in the realm of regulation in the whole field of telecommunications. For a time it seemed as if the minister was not seized with the importance of this, but with the appointment of the telecommission I am satisfied that he has now come to a recognition of the great importance of putting into one framework the relationship between regulation and operation in this tremendously important field.

I am sure that some of my colleagues who are very well informed on this subject may wish to address themselves to this legislation. I will look forward to later opportunities, at various stages of the bill's passage, to express further views thereon.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, when I heard the minister say at the commencement of his remarks that Canada has one of the best telecommunications systems in the world, I wondered whether he and I were living on the same planet. One Saturday morning this summer, while spending some time in my constituency, I wanted to do what has been for at least 100 years a relatively simple task: I wanted to send a telegram to the city of Yorkton, Saskatchewan, approximately 300 miles from Winnipeg. I phoned the Canadian Pacific telegraph office, since Yorkton is on the CP line, and I was told that although they could take my message they could not tell me, in view of the cut-back in services, whether the CP telegraph office in Yorkton was open, and consequently did not know whether my message would be delivered before Monday morning. So, when the minister tells us we have one of the best telecommunications systems in the world he and I must be talking about a different company.