

Inquiries of the Ministry

he pay some attention to the complaint of the Director of Research and Investigation that full prosecution under the Act is now hampered by a lack of staff?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Well, Mr. Speaker, the shortage of resources in the Combines Investigation Branch has been a matter of considerable concern for some years. We, however, like all other departments, are under very tight budgetary control, but a special concession was made in respect of the guidelines for the Combines Investigation Branch in order to help alleviate the shortage of resources.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman says the lack of staff has been a continuing condition. Would he consider having the operations under the Combines Investigation Act transferred to the Prime Minister's office which is not so hampered?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

INQUIRY AS TO CONCURRENCE IN COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question relates to the very important and very useful report by the chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development which was presented yesterday. I had intended to ask the chairman of that committee, the hon. member for Laprairie, whether he would shortly be moving concurrence in that report so that the House would have an opportunity to express its views on it. In light of the absence of the hon. member, I should like to address the question to the hon. member for Athabasca, the vice-chairman.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

BROADCASTING

EFFECT OF CRTC DECISION RESPECTING CABLEVISION

Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State. It arises out of answers he gave in the House on December 4 on the subject of community antenna television. I wonder whether his studies in respect of the CRTC have brought him to a point where he would like to indicate when he will make a statement on motions concerning it or whether he regards

[Mr. Howard (Skeena).]

the situation now as one which justifies action by the Governor in Council and the giving of guidelines to the CRTC?

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): To this question, Mr. Speaker, I have already replied that the Broadcasting Act does not allow the government to give instructions to or ask the CRTC to reconsider its decisions when they concern refusals to issue licences, but only when they have to do with granting, renewing or changing licences. As the act now stands, there is no question of giving such instructions to the CRTC.

[English]

Mr. Mahoney: Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Secretary of State whether the position of the government is that it is proper for a commission of this sort to make such a far-reaching decision relating to broadcasting policy in this country or whether it is the intention of the government to make it possible for this question to be considered by Parliament or by a parliamentary committee?

Mr. Speaker: I have some doubt about the first part of the question. The second part is quite in order and perhaps the minister might reply to that.

[Translation]

Mr. Pelletier: I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, that I have confused the two questions and that I might reply to the one that is not in order. May I ask then that that part of the question that was ruled in order be repeated.

[English]

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Secretary of State whether it is his intention to make it possible for Parliament or a parliamentary committee at least to consider the policy announced by the CRTC, which has such far-reaching effects upon broadcasting in Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Pelletier: Mr. Speaker, I have said time and again that it is not up to the Secretary of State, no more than to any other minister, to control the work of a parliamentary committee. But it is normal for the representatives of the CRTC, the same as those of any other institution coming under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State, to appear before the