

Government Orders

distributor. An American firm was doing the faxing. At the top it said: To MP Stan Keyes. They do not even know what MP means or anything else over in Buffalo.

Mr. Bellemare: How come you are on their list?

Mr. Keyes: How did I get on their list? I have no idea. The list of members of Parliament is a quick list and maybe some of us would be interested in that stuff so they take their chance and fax out their message. Then I looked quickly to find out where it came from. I wanted to call these people and let them know that I was a little more than disappointed that this kind of stuff is sent to my fax machine without my being asked.

Fax paper is expensive. Cling-cling, cling-cling, it just keeps chugging out of the machine for these marketers to attempt to get their message into our offices and to us.

Of course there is no listing of the company that is sending out this material to our offices. It is rather disappointing. I even had a letter just last month from a doctor. I did not check with him so he will not be named. I did not ask him if I could use his name. He is a surgeon at St. Joseph's Hospital at McMaster University. He wrote to the Minister of Communications. He writes:

I understand—the above bill which was tabled in March 1992 includes the misuse of fax machines for the purpose of transmitting unsolicited information and advertising.

I am writing to strongly protest the use of fax machines for the above purposes.

The fax machine which I use for my surgical practise is for the transmission and receipt of medical documents, many of which are urgent. In the past few months, this machine has been bombarded with unsolicited advertising from companies offering jobs and computer equipment for sale.

I urge you to bring about an early resolution to this problem.

It is not a problem that is unfamiliar to anyone in our ridings. Just imagine. A medical practitioner, a surgeon, quickly makes a call to a outfit that deals with something that is important to his practise or what he may be doing in surgery in the operating room in short order and he wants a response. Yet he has to wait for the "Will you buy a comic book faxed from Buffalo?" to finish going through his fax machine before he can get this information that is critical to him and his work as a medical doctor.

A blocking caller ID service was something the phone companies first resisted but have now fortunately relaxed their opposition to. In a very general way we need to take steps, although often at the provincial level, to restrict the flow of people's personal information from being gathered, assembled or circulated electronically by all kinds of these new enterprises, enterprises I suspect that probably originate right out of someone's basement.

• (1650)

What is the cost of putting a fax machine or a piece of equipment on a phone line out of your basement and saying: "No problem, you want your material known to individuals for purchase, I have a list". Maybe this enterprising individual has a master list of thousands of names and phone numbers and he or she may be able to disseminate the information and the availability of a particular product right out of their basement.

These concerns are all part and parcel of the concerns that we as legislators and the public policy-makers face in this information age. So many new questions have come our way.

While the list of issues in this area is quite long, suffice it to say that the bill we are dealing with on cellular privacy is just one example of how the age of high-tech is making matters of personal information a key public policy challenge of the 1990s and in particular of the baby-boom generation, I might add.

What is the problem, Stan? That is the question people are asking. Canadians have traditionally used a telephone that hangs on the wall or maybe in the bar downstairs, the old-fashioned one with the big, black, heavy receiver and the dial on it. This is a wired system and pretty private for the most part. Cellular phones are a very different ball of wax. In fact they are radio phones that pass calls along a series of cells in the public domain on the public airwaves.

The key difference is that this problem is not readily recognized by every cellular phone user. Let us face it, everyone who uses a cellular phone must realize that he or she is in fact making a radio call on that lightweight and very portable phone. Maybe we should adapt the old phrase, "let the buyer beware" to our new information age and let the user beware, cellular calls are radio calls. In short, people should stop expecting the same privacy they achieved with their hard-wired telephone in their