

best to correct them. Having received the report, this is a matter we will have to look into.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SUGGESTION GOVERNMENT NOT WILLING TO MAKE
FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN CORPORATION

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the CRTC in his letter of July 20 to the Prime Minister recommends against a royal commission into broadcasting at this time, not because it is unnecessary but because "the commission does not perceive that the will and the readiness exist to give priority to these problems nor to implement fundamental changes that might emerge from any major public inquiry". Does the Prime Minister accept that condemnation of his government, and if not, how does he justify the introduction of Bill C-43 which in essence maintains the status quo in broadcasting with the exception of emasculating the power of the CRTC?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I would not be able to join issue with the hon. member on his interpretation of the CRTC report. My understanding of it is that the CRTC does not recommend a royal commission for a host of reasons, some of which have been quoted by the hon. member. There are other reasons of a different nature, and they have to do with the hopes that the CBC and other electronic media will take corrective action without waiting for the long process of a royal commission.

It is a very important report which Mr. Boyle has produced. I must thank them for doing it in such a short period of time. The question itself was extremely complex. At this stage all I can say is that our ministers are already seized with it. I have indicated that the Secretary of State responsible for the CBC will be recommending action to Cabinet in a very short period of time.

Mr. Symes: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Prime Minister will read the report very carefully because in that report he will see that the CRTC does not believe, because of Bill C-43, that this government is interested in any fundamental inquiry or report to the broadcasting system.

My final supplementary question is: the CRTC in its report on the national broadcasting service calls for an examination of the present administrative structure for broadcasting before a royal commission is instituted to examine the role of the electronic media in Canada. Is the government prepared to undertake such an examination prior to proceeding with its new communications Bill C-43?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, before the hon. member recites all the recommendations contained in the report one after the other, could I refer to my earlier answer that we have been seized with the report yesterday, as every member of this House has been? We will take a little bit of time to answer each of its recommendations.

[Translation]

Oral Questions

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SUGGESTION REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE TABLED ON
MARCH, 1972, BE REVIEWED

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister.

As the current session is continuing under rather exceptional weather conditions, and as the report of the joint committee of the House of Commons and the Senate was tabled on March 16, 1972, can the Prime Minister tell the House whether he intends to recommend that Parliament reconsider the recommendations of that report, and among others that suggesting that the government be defeated only on a motion of no confidence passed by the majority and that, under other circumstances, the government continue to function despite the rejection of laws that are passed or suggested by the government. In other words, can the Prime Minister tell the House, in short, whether the recommendations of that committee could be studied anew by this Parliament so that they can be applied and so ensure Canada propose administration while allowing Parliament to perform its duties?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The question is serious, Mr. Speaker, and I share the concern of the hon. member with regard to allowing both the Parliament and the government to perform their duties far more efficiently and, I hope a bit more quickly. At this point in the life of the current Parliament, I can say that it is very unlikely that substantial reforms can be made of the type suggested by the hon. member. I can give him no hope in that regard; that is the type of reform we would like to suggest early in the life of a new Parliament. We have, as the hon. member is aware, through the leader of the government in the House, suggested in the course of the last few years a series of possible changes. We have never managed to achieve unanimity among the parties in the House on those changes, including those who object to the report in question. Therefore, I feel we should continue to make efforts in that direction, but I cannot propose immediate changes. In that matter, the hon. member knows, the government cannot act alone. It must try to achieve consensus among all the parties.

● (1430)

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF DELEGATION FROM UNITED
KINGDOM PARLIAMENT

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before continuing with the question period I know all members would want to join me in calling attention to the presence in our gallery of a very distinguished group of visitors in the form of a delegation. I am referring to the members of the Subcommittee on Social Services and Employment of the Expenditures Committee of the British parliament, headed by their very distinguished member of the Labour party, Mrs. Renee Short.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!