

*CRTC Act*

workings of the CRTC. I acknowledge that this particular proposal deals with national interest and policy. I would like to recount for Members a story of a difficulty that some people in my constituency are having with the day to day functioning of the CRTC. I hope that in the interest of Canadian unity the CRTC will see fit to tighten up its day to day operations. A small cable television company, Battlefords Community Cablevision, is assessed an increase on line rental by the telephone company from time to time. To use the different telephone company lines to carry the cable service, increases are levied as rates go up. Under the regulatory aspects of the CRTC, this company must go to the CRTC and ask permission to pass that increase a long to consumers. It is not a rate increase but merely what is known as a pass through.

● (1600)

The cable company experienced a difficulty some time ago. This year it knew six months in advance when the increase would be effected. It made the appropriate petition to the CRTC to be allowed to pass the increase on to the consumer. The appeal was made in August of 1984. After months of assuring this small cable company that the matter was being addressed, it was only last week that the CRTC got around to putting it into the *Canada Gazette*. Following the gazetting it will take another month before this proposal can be implemented. For six full months a small cable company has been asking for a very routine procedure.

It is points of day to day operation such as this that concern many Canadians about the CRTC's method of operating. Its bureaucratic method of operating makes small operators and individuals in Canada feel that they cannot deal with this regulatory agency. I hope the CRTC will take upon itself the responsibility to deal in a more understanding and directly responsive way with small cable television operators and small broadcasters in the country.

I would like to discuss the area of abusive broadcasting and the effect of Bill C-20 on Clause 3 of the Broadcasting Act. The provisions in the Bill with respect to abusive broadcasting are welcomed by many Canadians. As one of the members of the Opposition said earlier, this conforms with Section 15 of the Charter of Rights. It is not only a feminine issue per se. The particular amendment reads:

The programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should respect and promote the equality and dignity of all individuals, groups or classes of individuals regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability;

That provision goes beyond the issues of feminism and deals with the common decency of all Canadians who watch or listen to established broadcasting systems. These people have been demanding a clear-cut standard of what is considered public decency. This is not to undermine in any way the important measures being undertaken by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) regarding pornography in the Criminal Code. This is a matter of taste for many people. Over the years they have seen the standards degenerate to the point of gratuitous violence, sexist stereotyping and very unhealthy role models in terms of derogation of the family on popular television broad-

casting. We will now have specifically outlined provisions with regards to abusive programming within the Broadcasting Act.

I found the remarks made in the House this afternoon, particularly by members of the Opposition, to be very interesting. It has been said that this is an old Bill which is simply bringing in something that the past Government brought in. It is significant that in the first six months of the Government's mandate it is acting to effect policy within broadcasting. We are dealing with abusive programming. The last Government took considerably more than six months to listen finally to what Canadians have been saying about the CRTC and to deal with what we have been asking for for a long time with regard to broadcasting in Canada.

It has been said that we should be elucidating a clear-cut policy on telecommunications and deregulation before going ahead with this particular amendment. It is noteworthy that this amendment will go much further than affecting the very important issue of telecommunications and telephone deregulation. It will deal with many other issues related to the wide purview of CRTC in radio, television, telecommunications and other areas. For the sake of the public interest we should move as expeditiously as possible to implement this provision. As we debate specific issues before committee we will have an opportunity to examine further the individual policy initiatives which the Government plans to take.

In conclusion I would like to say that the steps taken in Bill C-20 are only a beginning. Bill C-20 deals with matters other than the specific ones we have addressed such as abusive broadcasting. It deals with matters such as satellite dish rebroadcasting. It lifts a burden off many private broadcasters by extending the maximum license length to seven years from five years. What this Bill endeavours to do could almost be called housekeeping. As we undertake broader policy initiatives and examine further the operation of the CRTC as well as the Broadcasting Act and related Acts and statutes, the Government will be able to embark on a system which more clearly represents the legitimate interests of private broadcasters, cable television operators, small locally owned co-operatives, and distant areas that rely to a greater extent on satellite television. These matters will open up further as we examine the Broadcasting Act and the laws that govern the CRTC.

I would like to indicate my support for this Bill and ask other Members of the House to give it their support. We can study this Bill further in committee. We can now move to the very important job of representing the legitimate interests of Canadians who want a clear-cut policy in the hands of the Government and leave the CRTC to regulate rather than to be the policy-setting agency which in fact it has been.