1983, and in submissions made to this legislative committee reviewing Bill C-19—

And now again in the review of Bill C-13.

—that Bell Canada and all the other companies within the Bell family of companies should continue to be subject to the limitation prohibiting the holding of broadcasting licences.

Because you have limited the time, Madam Speaker—and I think in a most repressive way—I should like to bring to your attention the fact that I cannot now read into the record the words of the Minister of Communications. However, she did make a very strong statement on May 5, 1987, to the Canadian Cable Television Association acknowledging that there was a serious concern and that she intended to deal with the issue of mixing television, cable and broadcasting with the telecommunications companies through the issuance of a directive.

• (1600)

I do not think the issuance of a directive is the answer. The Minister pointed out that she was very proud of what cable companies do, yet she noted their monopoly in the area. She also said that the cable companies were protected from intrusion into their market by Bell Canada and other common carriers, which otherwise would be presumably only too eager to expand their range of services.

If the Minister acknowledges that the telephone companies would only be too happy to intrude into this field, I do not understand why she has not acted and used her directive to indicate that she was serious in her intent.

Cable television undertakings should be the privileged users of broadcasting in this area; it is not the place for telephone companies. The issue has been clearly defined and articulated by cable people, and it was acknowledged by the Minister. She supported the observation that it was not the place for telephone companies.

I wish the Minister, who spoke so loudly to the cable people, would put into action what she says she meant, would retain Clause 7 of the original Bill C-19, and would accept my amendment. I think it would be in the best interests of all not to use the directive power under Section 22. It is obvious that the Minister has not used it yet and has had plenty of time to do so. It is very important that the matter be addressed and that the amendment be adopted.

In the end we are left very uncertain about the predicament of not knowing how, if at all, the Minister will exercise her discretionary powers, and they are only discretionary. If the Minister truly believes that BCE should not be involved in the cable business, and if she recognizes its strength in general to go into that business unless so prevented, I suggest that she should take the opportunity to set her intentions in legislative form and accept my amendment.

I was about to deal with Clause 12, but since you are indicating, Madam Speaker, that I have no time left I cannot do so.

Ms. McDonald: Madam Speaker, I should like to deal with both Clause 7 and Clause 12. The difficulty with the piece of legislation is that in effect the Government is writing policy without having any long-term goals. We are left rather perplexed with technological change and the possibility of fibre optics coming in. The Government itself is not sure what roles should be played by the telephone companies and by the cable companies. It says that it wants to keep telephone companies out of broadcasting, yet it does not seem to favour an amendment to the legislation which would make very clear that they could not be involved.

The Standing Committee on Communications and Culture has been holding hearings on broadcasting questions. We have had representations made to us that because of technological change and fibre optics technology—running new fibre wires into houses—telephone companies might be the appropriate carriers for broadcasting undertakings. We are very perplexed now about what is the right way to turn. It is unfortunate that we must make decisions on these immediate matters without some long-term policy to guide the decisions.

The purpose of my amendment to Clause 12 would be to have the clause, as amended, read as follows:

The provisions of the *National Transportation Act* and the *Railway Act* that provide for the obtaining of information by the Commission for the purposes of carrying out its powers, duties and functions in relation to the Company apply for those purposes to and in respect of any affiliate in the same manner and to the same extent as if the affiliate were the Company.

With this reorganization we want to ensure that there is not an escape clause so that the affiliates will be able to do what the parent company was unable to do or what would have been prohibited under the old Bell Canada Act. It would be simply to ensure that there would be no organizational way around it.

I note that a number of organizations made similar recommendations. For example, the Public Service Advocacy Centre recommended that a simple amendment to the Bill was required to ensure that Bell Canada could be effectively regulated in the interests of its subscribers. It wants Clause 12 to be amended to encompass the obtaining of information relevant to the mandate of CRTC from all Bell Canada affiliates, not just its parent.

It is absolutely essential for the CRTC to have full financial information. Information does not get out to the public at large. It is essential that the CRTC be able to get the information on the affiliates as well, so that rates can be regulated in a manner which is fair to consumers. That is the purpose of the amendment to the clause.

The proposal of the Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) deals with a different matter. It seeks to amend Clause 7 to make it very clear that telephone and broadcasting activities are kept strictly separate. If this amendment does not go through, the difficulty will be that the CRTC could be pressed very hard by telephone company affiliates to permit them to become involved in broadcasting undertakings. It is true that such a matter could be regulated under the Broadcasting Act. However, without an actual statement to the