

Telecommunication Corporation Act

bringing forward a bill to amend or change the Canadian Overseas Telecommunication Corporation Act.

I wonder whether this takes into account the fact that a few months ago the French dailies of America expressed the need of having in Canada a French language news agency because some newspapers pretended that there was a lack in the supplying of news.

I therefore wish that the communication facilities which would be provided by the extension of the telecommunication system in question be also extended, besides the countries mentioned a while ago in the list supplied by the minister, to countries of Latin America. I hope also that the prohibitive cost of news agencies will be reduced and that a new inter-American agency will be created which would be able to facilitate the relations of French daily newspapers on this continent with countries other than the commonwealth countries, since the measure under study tends to amend this crown corporation in order to promote our relations with other countries.

As far as increasing the number of directors of this corporation from five to seven is concerned, I hope that favourable consideration will be given to the suggestion of the hon. member for Chicoutimi regarding the advisability of appointing a French Canadian to one of these positions, in order to better even more the friendly relations between the two countries. This might also facilitate the creation, for the benefit of the French daily newspapers on this continent, of a news agency having easier access to the world telecommunications services.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Chairman, I have before me the 13th yearly report of this crown corporation. As there seems to be no French speaking person on the board of directors, I ask the minister whether it would be possible that one of the two persons appointed be French speaking.

[Text]

Mr. McIlraith: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm, the hon. member for Beauce and the hon. member for Chicoutimi raised this question. I draw your attention to the fact that I would expect one of the directors, Mr. Pelletier, has some knowledge of French.

Mr. Pigeon: I understand that Mr. Pelletier is a French Canadian and is one of the directors. but I am thinking of the administration in which no French Canadian has a part.

Mr. McIlraith: I think the hon. member moved rather too quickly because I have not completed my remarks as yet. There is the

engineer, Mr. Pelletier, on the board of directors. With the addition of two more directors I would think—I do not know how to express this in parliamentary language—the hon. gentlemen might feel the government would give very careful consideration to their remarks today.

In so far as the service to Brazil is concerned, I can tell the hon. member that the condition about which he speaks has been improved since August of this year. There are now circuit connections with Brazil. I may have given an imprecise answer to the hon. member for Edmonton West concerning certain connections with the trans-Atlantic cable on the European side. There are certain connections already made with some of these European countries. I believe the present act does not exclude them, but it is so there will be no doubt as to the legality of these operations that these changes are being made in the bill which will follow this resolution.

Mr. Pigeon: I asked the minister if this crown corporation sometimes used the United States Telstar.

Mr. McIlraith: I will have to get an answer to that question. The whole question of using satellites in substitution for cable is something we could discuss here at considerable length. Just when this stage will be reached, I cannot say now. I do not believe in using a crystal ball; I believe in careful planning and taking advantage of these developments, as well as pressing research on them as quickly as possible. I could not conjecture as to the time when we would use this device.

Mr. Lambert: I have one final question for the minister. Legislation in this regard has been ready for some time, so the corporation would have looked at the persons available to fill the expanded directorate. Perhaps the minister is in a position to tell us now who they are going to be.

Mr. McIlraith: I regret, Mr. Chairman, I could not enlighten the hon. member at the moment.

Mr. Pigeon: A few minutes ago I asked the minister if it was his intention to amend the regulations governing this corporation so there would be French Canadians taking part in the administration of the corporation.

Mr. McIlraith: The situation there is one having to do with the internal management of the corporation. I am going immediately to draw the situation to the attention of the management. I am not qualified to give an answer at the moment.

In so far as the use of Telstar is concerned, perhaps my answer was not sufficiently clear. We have not, of course, used Telstar.