

Government Orders

they affect the household and in particular the question about inside and outside wiring.

I think the amendment proposed by my colleague is entirely reasonable. It is not suggesting the CRTC must act one way or the other. The government would have the option at the very least to continue to give the CRTC the authority to decide whether or not it wants to be able to continue to regulate this. I think it is an entirely reasonable amendment from my colleague and one I hope the government will consider.

One of the implications of a decision like this was mentioned earlier by another speaker and that is the announcement by the telephone company in British Columbia of a number of lay-offs. We may debate some of the politics surrounding deregulation in the CRTC's ruling not to give a rate increase and Unitel's movement and others into the long distance field. That is the reality of deregulation and that is the direction we are seeing with this kind of legislation.

We just have to look to the United States to see what we will end up with. There was a shake down and now the large telephone networks may be firming up their roles in the field in the U.S. Costs have gone up and there is confusion in the marketplace. There are additional costs to the consumers from companies to pay for their advertising.

We think sometimes the beacon of deregulation is going to free up that marketplace for the consumer but where that has been done and we have seen the results of it over the course of time they have been failures.

I guess the best and current example we have in Canada is the deregulation in the airline industry where we were supposed to have a host of airlines. We are now down to two at best and who knows how long they will continue to exist.

I think it is an example of pointing out some of the concerns we have about the moves by the government in this legislation. I think it is a reasonable amendment. I hope the government will consider it.

• (1620)

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with a great deal of interest to the arguments made by my colleagues on the other side with regard to this motion.

I suppose my legal opinion is worth as much as those of my colleagues opposite and my friend from Mount Royal, but I do have the privilege of having access to legal officers who can give me advice with regard to the consequence of an amendment like this.

I can say to the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap that the motion he is proposing is not necessary. The intention is not to exempt lines from having to be covered under this amendment. As was indicated by my friend from Mount Royal, the goal is to ensure that in cases dealing with resellers or with other people who are legitimately exempted from the provisions of this bill, they would be.

I am told the definition of exempt transmission apparatus is only used to eliminate those companies that should not be regulated and that is precisely what the goal was. My friend from Mount Royal indicated that earlier and I think she was quite right. Once captured as a Canadian carrier, all aspects including the provision of local service are subject to CRTC oversight. The CRTC would decide not to insist that the telephone companies provide inside wiring only if it was in the public interest to do so and only if in the judgment of the CRTC, which is charged with the responsibility of serving as the regulator of our telecommunications system, it was desirable not to require that the companies provide that inside wiring. For my friends opposite to raise that spectre is to create unnecessary fear.

The CRTC is there to regulate industries that are legitimately captured under the bill and it is there to ensure that the public interest is properly reflected at all times and it will do precisely that. This particular bill was intended to deal with industries that were not intended to be captured here and that is what that particular clause does.

My friend's amendment would essentially drop off input and output devices such as keyboards and printers. This would mean they would not be exempt on the