

*Non-Canadian Publications*

It is rather astounding to one who does not live in British Columbia to discover that members of the committee from British Columbia, such as the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Anderson) and the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Raines) did not support an accommodation for KVOS in order that it might continue to operate, but in fact seemed very often to be in the forefront of the effort in the committee to have KVOS destroyed and taken off the air.

After the CRTC hearings held in Vancouver regarding the expansion of CBC television in that area, I do not see how members of the government, having fooled their constituents regarding this matter, could be in the forefront of the committee hearings making comments which seemed to fly directly in the face of the views of the people who elected them to this House. Surely it is their function to determine what their constituents feel about such an issue and to make their views known during debate in this House. They have not done so. In fact, they have been in the forefront of the fight against the service which is desired by the people of British Columbia. It is absolutely astounding, to me, that members from British Columbia could make the comments they have regarding the future of KVOS, such as the statements made by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni and the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour.

I wish to point out to the Minister of Communications (Mrs. Sauvé) the effect Bill C-58 already has had on television coverage in southern Manitoba. During the twenty-ninth parliament a number of applications were made by Manitoba cable companies to the CRTC for cable expansion. These hearings were convened in Winnipeg by the CRTC. The applications were heard at that time. It was felt by a number of residents in my riding, specifically in the Pine Falls area, that in view of the fact that they are some 80 or 90 miles from Winnipeg and have very marginal service from the CBC television station in Winnipeg, they should be able to have cable coverage in the Pine Falls area so there would be improved television service in that area.

They had received the support of a cable company in Winnipeg. This company was willing to move into the area to provide the desired service. So the cable company made the application, with the backing of the local people, in the hope that the application would be approved. All they were asking was that the same cable service be granted to a rural part of Manitoba that is presently being offered in Winnipeg. That was the essence of the application. In view of the attitude of the former minister of communications and the former chairman of the CRTC in respect of cable applications, that application is still pending. That occurred during the twenty-ninth parliament. We are still awaiting a ruling on that application. Every time we make an inquiry we are told that the application has neither been approved nor disapproved. We are told they are awaiting a cable policy announcement by the government.

Having heard the application and having deferred the decision, the CRTC, in essence, to the present time has made a negative decision because the service these people had hoped for has not been forthcoming. The people in that area ask why, when they are willing to pay for it, they cannot have the same type of service that is available in metropolitan areas such as Toronto and Winnipeg? I would

[Mr. Epp.]

appreciate the minister giving an explanation at some time, when she feels it necessary to intervene in this debate, in respect of this question which I believe is fairly straightforward.

In the debate on Friday last, the hon. member for Bruce-Grey (Mr. Douglas), a co-operative and active member of the committee, as recorded at page 10930 of *Hansard* for February 13, 1976 said:

In a brief answer, Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member—

He was referring to the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary (Mr. Wise).

—will look at the accelerated program that has been introduced in this House to allow places of 500 population or more to receive programming.

I want to point out to the hon. member for Bruce-Grey that we also have difficulties with the so-called accelerated plan. What has happened in respect of Bill C-58 is that for a number of years there has been a so-called border station—or private station as some people are in the habit of calling it—KCND, Pembina, North Dakota. This station, which is close to the forty-ninth parallel, but located in the United States, was beaming generally into the Winnipeg market as well as the surrounding rural area. It was providing for southern Manitobans a third English language television station with the proposals in Bill C-58. I am not trying to say to the minister that it was simply because of Bill C-58 that it happened, but it was part of the package, I feel. KCND felt that if advertisers advertising on KCND could no longer use money spent on advertising as tax write-offs, they would have to stop operations. They did so, and the assets of KCND, Pembina, North Dakota, were sold on the provision that with a successful application to the CRTC by Canawest television, these assets would be sold from KCND, Pembina, North Dakota, to KCND, Winnipeg, associated with Canawest.

● (1630)

Furthermore, KCND is presently associated with the Global network, and so far Winnipeggers—I am not speaking of cable users, but viewers in general—now, again, have three English speaking networks, namely, CBC, CTV and Global. Residents living in fairly close proximity to metropolitan Winnipeg are also recipients of those three English television networks. The result is that in the so-called remote areas the CBC—and I chuckle when I hear the word “remote” when I talk to CBC officials, because I am not talking of great distances from metropolitan Winnipeg but, rather, of the towns and villages 50, 60, or 70 miles away from Winnipeg about coverage of CBC in the extreme southeastern part of Manitoba—can supply very few, if any, satisfactory answers.

What happens is this. When KCND went off the air and Global came on, we lost television coverage in southeastern Manitoba in places such as Sprague, Piney and the surrounding areas. The people in this area at least receive KCND, Pembina, North Dakota, extremely well and the coverage is good. The CBC or CTV coverage in that area is virtually non-existent. It depends where you live. In some areas it is better than in others, but on balance the coverage is not good and people have resorted to buying boosters and television antenna rotors in an effort to pull in at least a marginal signal in that area. With the removal of KCND