

*Government Orders*

The minister himself suggested if we were going to recommend a five-year review why not make it two or three years. Why not have the review even more frequently? I had to agree with him. I thought for once the minister was making some sense.

This subamendment to the amendment has come through because of the minister's suggestion although it may have been said in jest. I think he was perhaps inadvertently on the right track. The idea of having a review every two years is quite appropriate.

This legislation takes us from the horse and buggy days of the Railway Act which was 100 years old, to the 21st century. It moves us in one quantum leap legislatively speaking from almost a century ago into this technological revolution we are undergoing today. It is a quantum leap in terms of the legislative initiative that this bill tries to accommodate. There are some good things in this bill that we in opposition have no difficulty whatsoever supporting.

There are other very worrisome concerns such as the whole idea of deregulating the market. As you know Canada's telecommunications market has been under regulatory authority since the telephone was brought into this country and the first lines were run along sections of the eastern seaboard and central Canada. This government in one quantum leap is moving us away from that regulated market structure and opening up the process of the competitive marketplace in the field of telecommunications.

In many ways this legislation dovetails into the provisions of the North American trading agreement. We can see we are getting into a situation where a century of regulated market structure is now being unravelled. In some cases it has led to some innovative changes in the industry. Nobody will deny that. In other areas it has led to job losses. In British Columbia we lost 820 workers in BC Tel as a result of the recent CRTC decisions to allow competition in the long distance marketplace.

In summary there are things happening today and things allowed for in this bill that we do not have a full grip on. I think we should have a provision for a review every two years to make sure the legislative recommendations in this bill can be fine tuned as the realities of our technological evolution continue to unfold.

**Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has simply demonstrated how frivolous the motion of the NDP is.

The hon. member conceded the NDP missed its opportunity in committee to propose that a review provision be put into the bill requiring it to be brought before the parliamentary committee on a regular basis.

Having discovered when the bill came into the House of Commons that the Liberal members were proposing a review clause, the NDP members decided they would try to outbid them and instead of five years they would propose two years. That would mean that every two years, by law, a parliamentary committee would have to review all the procedures of this bill.

That is simply frivolous and an abuse of the time of this House. I do not think Canadians will take that seriously. We are dealing with the replacement of a bill here that dates back to 1908, the Railway Act, which is regulating Canada's premier high-tech industry. Instead of a serious attempt by the NDP to suggest constructive improvements or to be helpful in terms of bringing us into a more modern age, we see simply blind opposition.

• (1535)

I listened with great interest to my friend from Kingston and the Islands with his generous comments about the possibility of my running for the leadership of my party. I am awaiting his cheque and I will be glad to reconsider my position when it arrives. It may have gone astray in the mail but I am prepared to receive it at any time.

It was fascinating for me to listen to my hon. friend when he said he fully expects that the Liberal Party will form the next Government of Canada. However, he says that the parliamentary committees, which would have a majority of Liberals on them and which would have Liberal-appointed chairmen, would not work. They would not sit down to review this bill unless there was a provision in the law that instructed them that they had to do so. This is notwithstanding the fact that the rules of the House and the rules of the committees provide that any committee at any time can study any relevant subject matter that it wishes to. For my friend for Kingston and the Islands, the only way that one could persuade a Liberal-dominated committee to do its job was if it was