

Government Orders

I would also like to mention a couple of points that are included in this bill to which the hon. member has not referred, and neither of the opposition critics have referred to this so far.

First, the private right of action for theft of signal is a very important aspect of this bill and something for which the industry has been craving and, indeed, those outside the industry have as well. I have in my hand an ad from the Hinton Parklander of July 30, 1990. The ad reads: "Farmers, ranchers and acreage owners; Live out of town? No cable TV? The home cable network invites you to a preview of rural satellite television. One hundred and fifty channels for \$79.99 a month for equipment only. An open house will be held at the Hinton Legion conference room. Eight music video channels, 30 sports channels, 21 movie channels".

Many of these services that are being openly advertised are not available in Canada legally because the owners of those signals did not intend that they would be distributed in Canada except under proper business arrangements. This bill will provide a private right-of-action for the owners of those signals as it would for any Canadian owner of any signals for the unauthorized distribution, not the unlicensed, but the unauthorized distribution of those signals.

I also want to point out and to give reassurance to those members who have condominiums in their ridings that this bill does give the CRTC the option of declining to license a condominium operator of a system provided that that operator, in the CRTC's judgment, is playing within the rules of the Canadian broadcasting system.

The hon. Minister of State for Housing and other members, including the hon. member for Beaches—Woodbine, have drawn to my attention the concerns of condominium operators in the metro Toronto area, those who live at 75 Graydon Hall in Don Valley East and those who live elsewhere in that area. I want to give them my assurance that, to the best of my knowledge, most of these operators are now playing within the spirit of the Canadian system and there will be no need for the heavy hand of the law to come down upon them.

If, on the other hand, they are starting to do the kind of thing that is being promoted in Hinton by satellite

operators, obviously, they then become those who are playing outside the rules of the Canadian system and the powers will be there within this bill to act upon it.

Mrs. Finestone: Isn't that the matter we have heard before?

Mr. Edwards: Yes, it is, Mr. Speaker, the individual who appeared before us.

I would like to go quickly to some of the points made by my hon. friend from Mount Royal on the issue of they who hear decide. I understand her concern, but from discussions I have had with those inside and outside the CRTC, I am satisfied that not only the chairman of the commission but others within the commission now feel that the system can be made to work well as it is drafted now. The hon. member for Mount Royal was concerned about the cumulative effect of they who hear decide and the setting up of the regional commissioners. I believe her concern would be Balkanization.

• (1920)

On the surface there may be some cause for concern, but I believe that those within the CRTC and certainly those in government who would, after all, have the power to give some direction under this bill to the CRTC are determined to see that there will be consistency of decision-making but on the other hand that there will be the undoubted benefits of regional application and considerations when decisions are made.

We are committed to the unity of this country, but we also I think arrive at that unity through a sense of being treated fairly across the country. Fairness I believe has one of its roots in the opportunity to assess fairly, to judge sensitively local conditions and to apply consistent national policies in a regionally sensitive way.

The hon. member for Mount Royal was concerned about what she called the dual powers and advocated the removal of the cabinet review power while maintaining the power of direction. I do not think it is necessarily appropriate to rub in the fact that the hon. member did support the dual power when she served on the standing committee. But as she has said, circumstances change and re-evaluations occur. I take it that she has re-evaluated her position in this regard.