

I certainly concur with that view. I do not think that all communications policy can be unilaterally determined by the federal government, nor should it simply be disposed of unilaterally to the provinces because of the enormous amount of interjurisdictional communications, namely, transprovincial, transboundary and international.

Clearly, jurisdiction has to be mapped out. In my view that would be most comprehensively and competently done here in debate in this House of Commons. The report also stated that the CRTC should be brought under closer policy control by the cabinet, though the board also said the CRTC should continue to make rules "within the context of clearer political direction." That flows clearly from the motion I have before the House today; it is important there be some political direction for dealing with northern and remote satellite broadcasting. In fact, the question could be expanded to include satellite broadcasting in the whole of this country.

The Howe report also stated that regulatory and political proceedings related to communications policy should be opened up to allow consumers more input. Very clearly, that should include people in the north. The notice printed in the November 22, 1980, *Canada Gazette* gives some opportunity for northern Canadians to make their views known to the Department of Communications and to the minister, but I think we have to go much further than that. Members from northern and remote areas of Canada have a right to stand in this House and debate CRTC communications policy to ensure that the question of the dishes which are already in place, whether pirating signals or not is adequately discussed. I would urge all members of this House, certainly those who are to speak on this topic, to support the motion in order that we can get on with the debate, perhaps in February, and deal with the very important issues which affect northern Canadians and those who live in remote areas.

Mr. Peter Stollery (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for providing us with an admittedly brief opportunity to discuss this very complex question of extension of services, direct broadcasting, pay TV and all the complicated technical issues which have been brought to the public's attention through the Therrien committee report.

I wish to remind the hon. member that the government, after recommendations made by the CRTC, has taken very important steps in trying to deal with this complex issue.

● (1620)

Recently we extended the test program to remote areas of Canada. I am sure this will be of interest to the hon. member who has just spoken. In October, 1975, the TVRO dishes were legalized. The hon. member has rather badly missed the point addressed by the Therrien committee. As a member of the New Democratic Party, I would expect him to be interested in the whole issue that has caused the problems with satellite communications, namely how do we protect the Canadian interests.

Broadcasting

It would be very simple to allow people all over Canada to buy dishes to put on the top of their houses, use the 14/12 gigahertz band and receive direct broadcasting from U.S. satellites for which, of course, they would not be paying. As the hon. member pointed out in a similar private member's hour last week, they would not be paying copyrights to the artists who originated the material being received on their television sets. That would be one point.

Second, and most important, the Canadian cultural interest would be lost. I did not hear the hon. member refer to that in his remarks. He did refer to the question of limited access to television in his constituency of Skeena, which is a remote area and which we all agree is underserved, as are many remote areas in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada.

The problem facing the government and the CRTC is how to face that issue while protecting the Canadian cultural interest in a world in which borders and frontiers in terms of communication are becoming increasing fuzzy and vague.

If the hon. member had read the Therrien report, he would agree that it is an extremely complex report. The technical problems alone make one wonder whether it would be in the interests of Canadians to have it brought to this House, where their study would take a large amount of time, when we have other questions such as energy, the constitution and the economy to discuss. The hon. member would be the first to protest if the government, having set up the CRTC to look into the issue—

Mr. Waddell: Nonsense!

Mr. Stollery: The hon. member shouts "nonsense". He does not have the discipline to sit in his seat and keep quiet when another member is speaking. That is the least we can ask. The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) conveniently forgets that we have these various commissions and independent bodies to look into these issues objectively to try and resolve them. This is done because we learned over the years that it is the functional way to operate.

I now wish to deal with the question of more adequately serving northern communities with radio and television. The hon. member ignored the very interesting section of the Therrien committee's report which addressed itself not only to those areas of Canada not served by television, but to areas of Canada without proper radio reception. Fortunately, this can be dealt with in a less complicated way than satellites and television. However, it is important.

I live in Ontario. Parts of my province do not have adequate radio service. There are small communities with 80, 90, or 100 people and mining camps throughout the enormous reaches of this country which do not receive adequate service. The CRTC is addressing itself to that question, trying to come up with a solution which will serve Canada better, giving people a larger choice of broadcasting, whether it be television or radio. On the other hand, it insists that the Canadian cultural interest, which I am sure the hon. member is as interested in as I am, is protected.