

*Telesat Canada Act*

Unfortunately, upon reading Bill C-184 as introduced by the government, we are somewhat puzzled as to the intentions of the government and the true policies which it intends to pursue in this field.

With regard to the introduction of this bill, if we go over its background, we realize that private enterprise, especially the sector concerned with communications and satellite communications is greatly interested in the establishment of a telecommunications network which could serve Canada as a whole.

Among those who claim to be the promoters of such a project, mention must be made of the Transcanadian Telephone Network which includes the common carriers mentioned in Schedule A of the bill. To those telephone service carriers engaged at the present time in telecommunications, we should also add the CN-CP telecommunications, a joint concern of both railway networks. The reasons which prompted those carriers to establish a Canadian satellite telecommunications system are set out in a brief which was presented in May 1967. The main reasons for promoting the development of such a network were to improve the ground communications system in Canada, so as to provide more services to all parts of Canada in fields of television, radio, telephone and the transmission of computer data. All those common carriers claim to be most suitable to build, develop and own ground facilities. They are also ready to take upon themselves the responsibility of the "space" aspect of the program. They claim to possess everything that is required in the administrative, financial and technological fields in order to carry out successfully such a project.

In that first brief, the above-mentioned common carriers add the following:

Just as they have done as regards the other components of the Canadian integrated communications system, the telecommunications common carriers are ready to finance the building of a satellite communication system and to operate it under government administration.

In July 1967, the National Research Council of Canada, taking into account the Special Study No. 1 of the Science secretariat, better known under the name of "Chapman Report", called for the drawing up and the carrying out of an overall space program for all Canada, and the appointment of a board of directors, the members of which would be selected from industry, the universities and the public service of Canada. The Council was advocating in a way the creation of a corporation or a

body responsible to a minister appointed by the Crown.

It was in March 1968 that the former Minister of Industry and Commerce (Mr. Drury) announced the government's intentions in the white paper entitled "A domestic satellite communication system for Canada".

The white paper came to the conclusion that it was necessary to create a satellite telecommunication system, since it was the most economical, in order to serve all the Canadian people.

The Canadian government also stated that all things being considered, it was advisable that it should take part in the creation of a corporation that would build, own and operate the satellites as well as the ground facilities of such a system. It also invited private enterprise to participate in the establishment and operation of such a corporation.

Following the presentation of that white paper, the Canadian telephone system and the CN-CP Telecommunications presented new "Considerations and Recommendations". In rather plain language, the brief described their resources and competence and added that such a system would perhaps never be economic.

On the other hand, the brief added that it would be necessary to create an integrated system "without using public funds."

Such are the misgivings and the objections of the telecommunications common carriers. They say on one hand, that the system can never be efficient and, on the other hand, that they are not in favour of committing public funds to the creation and to the operation of this system.

However, the authors of the brief accepted the invitation of the government and finally accepted the government co-operation in a domestic enterprise of satellite telecommunications, in order to protect the public interest and to co-ordinate the international relations concerning such a system. Finally, they say that the corporation for telecommunications by satellite should be jointly owned, according to the member of shares and that the telecommunication companies should participate fully with the government in the ownership of the Corporation.

• (9:20 p.m.)

It is this last aspect of the question set out at length but not very clearly in Bill C-184 I should like to deal with in the few minutes remaining to me, because it seems to us that this is really an essential question, that is, the ownership of such a system, the role of the

[Mr. Rodrigue.]