

Telesat Canada Act

C.B.C., the Canada Council and the new performing arts centre which opened this week are well known. Its initial cost was to be \$9 million but its final cost rose to \$2.36 for every man, woman and child in Canada. This is done for social and political reasons. We are continuing along the path of constructing lavish and expensive projects, all in the name of Canadian unity and cultural identity. This government, like its predecessors, continuously promotes grandiose schemes while ignoring, or standing aside and wringing its hands, trends and activities far more dangerous and crucial with regard to the erosion of Canadian national purpose and pride.

We propose to spend millions on this project, but what are we doing about foreign takeovers of Canadian industry? It is notable that one of the companies that is building the satellite is R.C.A. of Montreal, a wholly owned United States subsidiary or branch plant. Incidentally, this company will hold all the patents for its share of the components. Furthermore, what is the government doing about our social objectives in the case of magazines and publications, textiles, the radio and television industry, and our higher educational institutions where there are professors who are not Canadian citizens? All of these will have a much more profound effect on communications and cultural development in Canada than this project. Each of these aspects of our economy is being engulfed by foreign takeovers. I say that the government is doing nothing about it, but here we are again going off on another luxurious tangent, largely in the name of social, cultural and political objectives. I do not know whose political objectives they are. Perhaps they are the Liberals' objectives but they are certainly not mine.

It might be worth noting that the minister has emphasized the social objectives and soft-pedalled the economic ones. The house might have cause to wonder why. I should like to support what I said by quoting from the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications of December 9, 1968, page 163:

Mr. Nowlan: But in the development of it we give expertise to our Canadian research scientists and the end product will be something—not like the C.B.C.—but for our national existence more than the functional end of the satellite, because as you remarked earlier, there could be a joint satellite between the Americans and the Canadians that would cover almost all North America.

Mr. Kierans: Our purpose in going into this satellite is social objectives; they may be political too, but let us say, social objectives as the way of

unifying the country, that that one satellite as far as we are concerned just blankets the whole of Canada. It could blanket Alaska too and there may be some arrangements that would be worked out to look after the American needs in Alaska. That is a social objective leading to a greater unification of the country. That satellite would be devoted to Canadian aims and objectives and will be programmed, I would imagine, in a way that is acceptable by the Canadian people and their cultural requirements or needs.

● (12:20 p.m.)

From then on, I suppose you could build a case that it would be better to rent the space on the American satellite, on straight economic grounds. However, I do not think you could even build it on economic grounds, if you take a long run approach to this rather than a short run. In a short run there will be investment costs, which may include some losses in the operations in the early years, as any corporation going into any kind of field expects that its development and marketing costs, in getting control of a market, will lead to losses. It then incorporates this in the amount of capital it has to set aside in order to make the thing viable.

As far as we are concerned, the economic gains in the long run will more than outweigh the costs, because by our scientists developing programs here in Ottawa in co-operation with industry our manufacturers can easily develop markets with different aspects of such a satellite; in other words, their export potential.

We might ask how this will happen if the patents are owned by people outside this country. There are some interesting assumptions in the ideas expressed in the quotation I have just read, and if there were time I would discuss them in detail. But I am speaking now of the economic justification of Telesat, the assumption that some possible spin-off effects during the development of satellite expertise is reason compelling enough for embarking on this project. It occurs to me that the spin-off argument could be employed to justify almost any venture in the scientific field—nuclear rockets, supersonic bombers, germ warfare, or even more useful fields of research such as water purification, urban transportation or efforts to improve the delivery of mail. Much more could be said critical of our scientific policy, particularly in the light of the number of projects which have been scrapped since this government took office. I have in mind, for instance, the cancellation of the oceanographic study program and the Queen Elizabeth Observatory near Oliver, British Columbia.

It might certainly be more efficient to invest our money directly in research into problems for which solutions are needed. Perhaps this would not be so glamorous or so political, but it might be much more useful in