

Government Orders

I have said in the House before one of the things that scares me is when we rely exclusively on competition in the marketplace what might happen is that just those people in the larger markets, in the big cities, will get hooked up to the new technology. The people in rural areas, even in the Okanagan and areas like that, such as the Kootenays which is my friend's riding, will not be plugged in.

Right now we are very lucky in Canada. We have almost everybody plugged into cable. We have a tremendous system. We do not really need Parliament in the same form any more. If we get interactive television we can have people vote through their television sets. On the next vote rather than us standing up voting, we could just ring it up and have 15 million people vote if we wanted to. There are many things we could do. This is a crucial battle.

That is why this bill is very important. Who controls the inside wiring? Is it to be the phone companies led by a group called Stentor, which is BC Tel and Bell Telephone, or is it to be the cable companies through a group called Unitel, led by a whole bunch of other people but basically by the largest one, which is Rogers? These are the big struggles that are going on.

I want to make this point and it will come out tomorrow at the CRTC hearings. If the CRTC says that it is going to require the cable companies to put \$200 million into Canadian communications, Canadian TV shows and so on, then who pays that? The people who pay are the ordinary consumers, the ordinary men and women in our ridings. They are the ones who are going to pay, not the cable companies or the phone companies. It all comes from the pockets of ordinary Canadians.

I ask the House to consider the longer term question of how many wires should go into a house. Should it be just the cable companies and the phone companies or should there be one wire? Should it be regulated or should it be nationalized? I think it should be regulated, completely regulated. Now the cable companies get off the hook. They only have part of their charges regulated while the phone companies have all their rates regulated.

In my riding and in your riding, Mr. Speaker, a few months ago they increased cable rates. One brochure that went to the people said rates increased by 43 cents because the CRTC told them to do it and another said

they changed channels a bit so they were charging 52 cents. I am just picking these general figures.

• (1615)

The third one was \$3 because they put in a few more channels. They did not tell the people it was not regulated by the CRTC and that they could have said no. As Nancy Reagan said: "Just say no". The people could have said they did not want to pay an extra \$3 and they did not want those extra channels, but they were not told that. It is called negative option marketing.

I made a submission to the CRTC a couple of months ago and I hope in its decision tomorrow it is going to outlaw negative option marketing as was done in the United States.

In summation on this amendment it is very important with regard to the wire inside the house. It is the future technology. It is going to be linked up by the new ways of marketing and buying and it is a big struggle between the giant telephone companies and the giant cable companies.

In the end it is just the little people like you and me who have to pay. Our constituents are paying for this whole show so we should have a say in how it works.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before resuming debate with the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby—Violence against women; the hon. member for Hillsborough—Veterans Affairs; the hon. member for Don Valley East—Housing; the hon. member for Davenport—Environment; and the hon. member for Ottawa West—National Defence.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on some of the work my colleague from Okanagan—Shuswap has done on Bill C-62. It is very significant legislation to amend legislation regarding the telecommunications industry in Canada and in particular the amendment he is proposing regarding the input and output of provisions given to the CRTC. I think this is very important. It may not seem so terribly significant here but the implications for some of these regulatory changes are very dramatic in the way