

The Chairman: Why?

Mr. Boucher: Community levels—how many people are interested locally? If they all produce—my gosh, it will be fantastic.

The Chairman: It would be good.

Mr. Boucher: We haven't had a refusal yet to start preliminary discussions. I speak for myself, where we have approached people they have said "Yes, this sounds like a good idea." We haven't had any negative reaction at all.

The next stage is, once the facilities are available on a grander scale across Canada, will these people produce? My indications are many will.

The Chairman: Many people talk glibly about interests in this special interest programming. Many witnesses came before the Committee and said there was great interest in it. We thought: "Let's really find out."

I am satisfied from the very initial response and the beginning of the returns, that there is an enormous interest.

Mr. Boucher: We have to agree with you. That is why we are enthusiastic.

The Chairman: All right. Couldn't you be doing more? I take your point that you are going to be doing more.

Mr. Boucher: I just spent the last two weeks in Ottawa!

Mr. Allard: Mr. Chairman, in answer to your question, what is the incentive?

The Chairman: I think the incentives is to provide a service to the people of Canada.

Mr. Allard: Other than being a good citizen?

The Chairman: I think being a good citizen is part of being a good communicator.

Mr. Allard: We are in the business. We are profit-motivated. We are. We are entrepreneurs.

Mr. Fortier: So are the CTV people.

Mr. Allard: Has anybody asked the CTV to be free of sponsorship?

Mr. Fortier: They provide 60 per cent Canadian content...

The Chairman: Perhaps I could ask you, Mr. Allard, I see the point you are making

but what other function do you have besides making a profit? Are you not interested in providing a service? I am sure you are.

Mr. Allard: Oh, yes.

The Chairman: What do you use that service as?

Senator Prowse: Making a profit!

The Chairman: What do you see that service as?

Mr. Allard: providing the best service possible to the community we are serving.

The Chairman: What kind of service?

Mr. Allard: The service we are providing today must be appealing to the community since in excess of 70% per cent of the community is subscribing to the service we are providing.

The Chairman: You say in the brief, and it is repeated several places in the brief but I won't find them now, that this is primarily because your subscribers want to receive more American programmes.

Mr. Allard: Not in all areas.

The Chairman: I think it says that is the primary reason. Doesn't it say that in the brief somewhere?

Mr. Boucher: I think additional programming or variety. It works two ways. We do provide additional programmes from Canadian sources in many cable areas. For instance, there are areas where U.S. programmes are not available at all and yet cable television is thriving.

Mr. Allard: There are certain areas in Ontario and Quebec where the greatest demand is for Canadian programmes transmitted by Canadian stations.

The Chairman: Do you think the industry would be as flourishing today if it were not for the demand for American programming?

Mr. Boucher: I agree.

Senator McElman: Page 41 points up, the primary purpose of cable companies is to provide broadcasting by U.S. stations. Is this really the primary purpose?

Mr. Allard: For cable companies across Canada probably it is; but not necessarily so when you look at it on a regional basis.