

Supply—Transport

permitted to go further? I have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion there can be no other honest conclusion but that the Snelgrove interests should not be permitted to bring about, in the manner in which they have endeavoured to do so, this agglomeration of power over the thinking of Canadians.

The day this application is granted to these people, if it is granted, the value of the franchise in Barrie for the Snelgrove station will increase, I am told, by at least \$3 million. That is a very large political melon to hand to anyone, whatever his political contribution may have been.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I think it would probably suit all hon. members if I were to reply briefly to what the right hon. gentleman has said about channel 3. I propose to leave the other matters, if I may, until any other members who wish to speak have spoken. I can then reply on all the other subjects seriatim. But on each occasion when this matter has been brought up I have spoken on it and I think I ought to do so again.

I should like first of all to clear up the point about my "tremendous Canadianism". What I said was—I believe anyone who takes the trouble to look at *Hansard* will find that this is so; I may have said it clumsily, not having the right hon. gentleman's skill with words—that I had been advised that if one of the Buffalo stations on channel 2 or channel 4 had its transmitter tower moved about 25 miles it would then be impossible for channel 3 to serve metropolitan Toronto because it would create too much interference with that Buffalo station.

I believe this. I cannot prove it because I am not an engineer. If, before Canada had indicated that we were considering the possibility of using this channel in metropolitan Toronto, the transmitter of one of these Buffalo stations had been moved, it would then not have been possible to secure this channel and make it available to metropolitan Toronto. It was my opinion that if this was the factual situation it was advisable to do whatever reasonably could be done to see that this channel, no matter who might use it, would be available for Canada provided we could ensure this.

That is all I said. I did not get very excited about it. It seems to me this is a reasonable position to take. It does appear to me that any minister of transport who failed to try to preserve for Canada the maximum number of

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

these channels, particularly for the second largest aggregation of population in Canada and the largest using the English language, would have been derelict in his duty.

● (5:00 p.m.)

For that reason we did take the procedure—I am afraid without prompting I cannot give it the technical name—with the Federal Communications Commission of indicating that this channel might become available for metropolitan Toronto. I believe by doing that we made it difficult at any rate for one of the Buffalo stations to move its transmitter.

Mr. Diefenbaker: When was that communication?

Mr. Pickersgill: It was some time last autumn. I could easily get the precise date. I am not making any secret of this. It was after the matter was brought to my attention by the Snelgrove interests. I do not deny that for one minute.

The second fact is that channel 3 had a licensee. He is Mr. Snelgrove and he had a licence which he got under the previous government. I am not basing anything on that. He did get it though and if he had just sat on this channel in Barrie and made no application to have it transferred nobody could have applied for it in metropolitan Toronto. If he had kept it where it was in Barrie then it could not be applied for in Toronto. That seems to me the most elementary arithmetic.

With regard to the time he did apply I gave the whole timetable or the whole chronology the other day. He submitted two technical briefs to my department, as everyone does before making an application. Then in January he and his associates, in other words, the firm, made their application and that application is still being studied from a technical standpoint in my department. I inquired a couple of days ago and I am told that the technical study will not be completed for at least a week and maybe longer. If it is not technically satisfactory that is the end of it. It will go nowhere. Further, if the applicants choose to withdraw their application then nobody can have channel 3 as long as they have the licence in Barrie. These are the facts. I am trying to make them as simple as possible because there is really nothing mysterious about this at all.

But if this application is sent forward to the B.B.G. then the B.B.G. will have to decide several questions. They will have to