

### Broadcasting

government seems to think it is more important to get involved with the Australian domestic satellite program.

● (1610)

With respect to licensing, television is received only by earth terminals, namely TVRO. In a written statement, the minister indicated that rather than having to wait 18 months to get radio standards procedure 116, more commonly known as an RSP-116, northern Canadians who are interested in getting a licence for their earth receiver will have to wait only 90 days instead of 18 months. However, the minister is reviewing extension of licences to categories not now eligible. But, here is where the trick comes in. We have the problem with the CRTC and since this minister took office we have policy which has been handed down by press release. Whose interests will be upheld in a situation such as this where there are powerful southern cable systems and television companies in the southern part of the country and very powerful viewing audiences who know what they want to watch? No one goes into a home in Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver saying that you must watch CBC tonight if there happens to be a good movie on another television station. That person may never turn on Canadian television. However, the policy of the government right now is essentially to use Canadians living in the north and remote parts of Canada as guinea pigs for Canadianization policies.

I think this situation requires a parliamentary debate. The CRTC can hear evidence ad infinitum from many Canadians living in the southern part of Canada, but northern Canadians are only represented in a limited number of forums. The Parliament of Canada is certainly one place where we should debate and decide what we intend to do with respect to northern and remote television policy.

Under the review which is now going on, reported in *The Canada Gazette* for November 22 of this year, there is opportunity for formal notices to be given and I would urge all northern Canadians to make submissions before the end of February. I think that around the end of February would be a good time for a full parliamentary debate on the question of CRTC, northern and remote television policy.

There are 2.8 million Canadians who have access to two television channels or less. The overwhelming majority of people in my riding, until recently, had no television access whatever. Isn't it about time we let them have a voice?

Mr. Ron Bothwell owns a company selling satellite receiving stations near London, Ontario. As reported in *The Globe and Mail* for November 26, 1980, he had this to say about the Department of Communications—I quote from the report:

Mr. Bothwell said the federal communications department was acting to protect certain cable television interests, since 'federal officials admit that they'll tolerate illegal satellite dishes only in those areas where cable is not available.' He said, for example, that the communications department told him it was willing to turn a blind eye to the operation of satellite dishes in Penetanguishene, but would not allow dishes in Waterloo. That kind of arbitrary action is both absurd and unconstitutional!

There are several vital quotations in the final Therrien report. When considering whether U.S. signals should be carried, at page 17 of the report, we read:

In determining priorities for services to be carried on Canadian satellites, the carriage of U.S. stations or programming services should not be permitted, subject to a review of this policy should surplus capacity become available.

That recommendation from page 17 of the report applies directly to my riding. People have paid for these dishes, people have installed their own cables. A fantastic amount of community work has been done to bring this form of entertainment into communities. While that sort of recommendation is going forward, for the minister not to rise in this House and call for a parliamentary debate himself is the height of absurdity.

At page 19 of the Therrien report, we find the following:

Several of the operators of unauthorized satellite reception and delivery facilities who appeared before the committee said they would gladly switch to a Canadian satellite if an attractive service were made available.

I appreciate that because I know that almost all, if not all, the satellite operators in my riding and probably throughout the north would start to use a Canadian satellite if there were full broadcast programming.

However, I think we all know that the broadcasts coming from Telesat and ANIK V are not around-the-clock. There are not many movies or regular local or regionalized news broadcasting, though these are extremely important.

An interim measure asked for by the government is for the CBC to have CTV programming on the present channel which distributes broadcasting of the House of Commons proceedings. I am not sure how many of the residents in the northern part of my riding would want to watch the House of Commons debates—I am sure there are many—but I think probably there are other programs they would appreciate being broadcast on Canadian satellites.

**Mr. Knowles:** They are watching right now.

**Mr. Fulton:** At page 20 of the Therrien report, we find the following:

It is said that the CRTC and DOC have lost, or are rapidly losing, control of the Canadian broadcasting system, and firm action should be taken immediately to regain that control.

There is no question that the CRTC and DOC have lost complete control, not only of the technology, but of what is happening on a global scale in terms of what people are watching and how they are obtaining it. To simply move in now with some weird red tape and various licensing procedures and proposals to shut off, or to allow the American satellites to scramble their signals, is really a hodge-podge way of dealing with such a serious situation.

Recently the C.D. Howe Institute issued a report on federal-provincial aspects of communications policy. Generally, they have concluded the following:

Neither a continuation of a centralized nationwide control—as originally proposed by the federal government—nor a massive turnover of authority to the provincial governments—as proposed by Quebec—is really acceptable.