

fact, the Bill died on the Order Paper, never having been passed into law.

At that time condominium owners across the country applauded and said that it was wonderful that the Government had finally seen the light. They were sure, when any other legislation came forward, that it would not contain this type of provision. Much to their shock, and much to my shock, Bill C-136 came forth with the same provision.

The Minister has assured me, and the Minister has assured condominium owners, that they will be exempted under these regulations. However, as has been so eloquently put by other Members so far, there is no assurance whatsoever that the Minister will be in her job 50 years from now, and the next Minister may very well do something differently.

In fairness to all of us, to 5 per cent of Canadians, over 1 million Canadian condominium owners, I implore the Minister and the Government to put forth an amendment acceptable to treat condominium owners exactly the same as all other homeowners.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, in the last week, I have received over 100 letters and telephone calls. Since the beginning of this week, my assistant in Winnipeg tells me that they are coming in at the rate of 25 a day or more. This is a difficult problem. Those of us who believe in a Canadian radio and television system which gives the people of Canada the ability to watch and listen to Canadian programming have been concerned and have to be concerned about the problems which have been created and are being intensified by the development of new technologies. Cable and satellite give people the opportunity to watch a vast number of programs, most of which are not Canadian.

• (1630)

I and all members of the NDP are sympathetic with the efforts of the Government to foster and promote the ability of the Canadian people to watch Canadian programming on television or to listen to Canadian programming on radio. It is for that reason that we have laws and agencies such as the CRTC. It has always been accepted by Governments—the former Liberal Government and the present Conservative Government, that individual homeowners in Canada have the right to have a television dish which they can use to pick up programs from any part of the world, as long as those are not passed on and sold to others and so on.

I think that the people who live in condominiums have the right to say: "We are just as much individual homeowners as are people who live in single dwelling homes or in attached dwelling homes. Because we are homeowners, we should have the same rights as the people who live in their own homes". They have said that in the letters I received. I will quote part of one such letter which reads:

This Bill, if passed, will be a flagrant act of discrimination against everyone who chooses to live in a condominium. In its present form, the authors of this Act (the CRTC) do not consider that condominiums are homes. In fact,

Broadcasting Act

Bill C-136 would only licence, regulate or penalize those Canadians who do not live in single residences.

And it goes on.

I listened with interest to the comments of a number of Members. I found it interesting that the last three speakers each represented different political Parties. In other words, the speeches were made by Members from each of the political Parties represented in this Parliament.

We respect the present Minister. We accept her assurances, that in her view the Bill as drafted does not infringe on the rights of condominium owners. As it has been pointed out, this Minister will not always be the Minister of Communications. There will be other Ministers. The CRTC board may not rule against the right of condominium residents to participate in the programs which come from the satellite on their building. The CRTC may not rule that way, and a future CRTC board may rule to the contrary.

I am not a lawyer, but I remember that when the parliamentary committee was dealing with the proposed Constitution and the Charter, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson), proposed an amendment which he said would spell out the rights of labour unions to operate as they have up until now. The then Minister of Justice rejected that proposed amendment, saying that it was not necessary, because no court would rule in a way which would be contrary to the spirit of the proposal that my colleague was making.

What happened? In reality, a case was taken to a court in Ontario, sponsored by that great organization, the National Citizens' Coalition. The judge hearing the case ruled in precisely the way the then Minister of Justice said that no court would rule. What the judge was really saying was that it did not matter what the Minister who introduced the Bill said it would mean; what matters was what the Bill actually said.

Despite the assurances given by the present Minister of Communications (Miss MacDonald), for whom I have a great deal of respect, I do not think that that is enough. I think that the Bill, if we are going to be fair to condominium residents, has to make it very clear, without any doubts, that they have the rights that individual homeowners have, to benefit from the use of a satellite dish.

I have not spent a sufficient amount of time in order to say that I prefer the amendment moved by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young), or the amendment moved by my friend, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy). However, I would urge the Minister to accept an amendment to the Bill which would spell out quite clearly the rights of condominium residents to continue to be able to benefit from the programs which can be picked up by the satellite dish.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Mount Royal and then I will recognize the Hon. Member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.