

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak this afternoon in this debate on broadcasting and television on the west coast and on the border between Detroit and Windsor, and Toronto and Buffalo.

Those of us from the west coast cannot think of television without becoming immersed in the debate that is going on among our constituents as to the advisability of the course of action to be taken by Bill C-58 as well as the recent CRTC hearings on the west coast. As we all know those hearings have been left in a state of suspended animation awaiting the outcome of an appeal against the decision of Mr. Justice Dubé concerning the right of Capital City Co-operative to challenge Victoria Cablevision Company, the present holder of the franchise for cablevision in Victoria. Everything on the west coast appears to have come to a halt pending the result of that appeal, as far as changes in cablevision, television, and radio are concerned. I would have preferred the CRTC to continue its hearings as I believe this bill is tied in with them.

When one speaks to people on the west coast about the loss of the channels they are accustomed to watching from Portland, Seattle, and Tacoma the conversation usually gets around to KVO5. People invariably say that the government is going to look after that with Bill C-58. This is the kind of flying in the face of public opinion which leads to our constituents feeling they are not being considered, and this bill is an example of that.

I was interested in the answers given by the Minister of Communications (Mrs. Sauvé) during question period the other day to my colleague, the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro). She seemed to think the entire problem was in Vancouver, but the CRTC difficulties concern Victoria cablevision. I do not think it is any secret that Victoria is in a prime position regarding two things in Canada—one is good weather and the other is good television.

This good television on the west coast is a blessing and that did not come about because of the free broadcasts of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; it came about because Canadians wanted to watch stations other than the CBC. On the west coast, without cable we can watch channel 2, the CBC station in Vancouver; channel 6, a station which broadcasts largely CBC programs in Victoria, and CTV on channel 8. If these are the great disseminators of information and entertainment that they pretend to be, one would assume that a cablevision company would have had a hard time getting people to pay, but this is not the case. Cablevision in Victoria and Vancouver consistently presents 10 or 11 good channels for viewing, and the programs offered are the ones that the people in the area want.

There was a time when I was a proud supporter of Canadian television in that I thought it was usually in better taste than the television that flowed across the border into the Toronto area, or the Niagara Peninsula or Windsor areas, and some into the area of Vancouver. That is no longer my opinion. By chance, as I was listening to the debate earlier this afternoon, I was trying to sign some correspondence and came across a letter from a constituent dated January 25, 1976. This is what she says:

Dear Mr. McKinnon:

May I ask you to protest on our behalf the program re contraceptives

Non-Canadian Publications

on TV-CBC news Saturday night, January 24, 1976. This disgusting program beamed into our homes was paid for by our money! It is absolutely impossible to understand the mentality and dishonesty of the program's producer, i.e., CBC and we wish to make our objection fully known.

Yours truly,

I get many letters like that. The point I am trying to make is that the plan of the government appears to be to give us less and less choice of what we watch in our homes. If Bill C-58 should pass without amendment it would limit us even further.

There are many things that bother me about this bill and I should like to mention one of them now. That is the very integrity of this House and of Canada. We are debating the broadcasting portion of Bill C-58. If this were to pass without amendment we would destroy services enjoyed by Canadian citizens for over 20 years. I am not saying it is all good or all bad, but there should be a reason to do so in Canada's best interest.

No one in this House can say that the *Time* and *Reader's Digest* portion of this bill has not so obscured the broadcasting section that no in-depth analyses of broadcasts have been made by members of the House and the press.

Again and again we hear in the corridors, in the caucus, and read in the newspapers descriptions of Bill C-58 as the publishing bill, or *Time* and *Reader's Digest* bill. In some circles it is known as the Maclean-Hunter monopoly bill. But I say to you, Madam Speaker, that this portion of Bill C-58 will affect more directly the lives of millions of Canadian citizens than the publishing side ever will.

I spoke of the integrity of Canada and this House. Let me list some points. First, we are accepting a service from the United States stations that our citizens want. This has been amply demonstrated in British Columbia in recent weeks and at the CRTC meeting in Vancouver. As a citizen of Canada I say that if we take the service we have to pay for it; otherwise, we have to turn down the service. Then what howls we would get from one end of the country to the other! That is how important our constituents think this is.

Second, has anyone from either side of the aisle taken the time to analyse this bill and this portion of it from the trade point of view? I do not think we have, and we are remiss in not doing so. There is a basic difference between publishing and broadcasting. Publishing, that is *Time* and *Reader's Digest*, is clearly a Canadian industry. The publishing, printing, and circulation is done within Canada. In publishing we are dealing with an internal tax. Broadcasting is an imported service. It is imported into the Detroit area from stations in Windsor, and into Toronto and Vancouver from stations in Buffalo and Bellingham.

Again I refer to our integrity. Have we analysed the Canadian signed agreements under GATT? We have agreed as a sovereign nation that we will place no tax on imported products, which can be defined also as services, to the detriment of the imported product over a domestic product. The broadcasting portion of this bill is not imposing an internal tax, but rather under agreements we have signed it is a subverted tariff. That is what the British Columbia lumber industry has been trying to tell the Canadian parliament this week when it speaks of retaliatory legislation. When we give up our integrity we can expect a reaction from any government involved. We in this House, and Canada as a whole, would do the same.