

Statement on Educational Broadcasting

matter of very considerable importance to Canada as a whole and to all the provinces, and a matter about which the government of the province of Quebec has expressed particular interest and concern. It is my hope that the procedure outlined by the Secretary of State will facilitate a cordial settlement of the various points of view which have been expressed, and allow this matter to proceed satisfactorily.

I must say, however, I personally have some doubts about this idea of turning over the negotiations, discussions and arrangements with the provinces to a task force, particularly in view of the concern which has been expressed by one province. I am not persuaded at this moment that this is the proper approach. The Secretary of State has expressed his apology for the shortness of notice in respect of this statement, and I accept his apology. Surely the procedure he has suggested is not satisfactory in view of the constitutional importance which is attached to this matter, at least by one province.

Let me at this time content myself by emphasizing an aspect of this matter of which I am sure the Secretary of State is aware. I refer to the procedure he suggests should be followed. Without trespassing too far let me say we have noticed lately that those who are seized with finding solutions to federal problems have coalesced.

• (3:00 p.m.)

I do not think the federal government should adopt a procedure which unnecessarily gives encouragement to and provokes that kind of reaction.

In all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, I would urge that the government of Canada proceed with these discussions in a different way, one which fully recognizes the importance the provinces attach to a full discussion of these problems. The federal government should not simply relegate the matter to a task force appointed by it.

Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, like the Leader of the Opposition I wish to express the view that the advent of E.T.V. is a matter of great importance to the cultural and educational enrichment of Canada. On balance we welcome the statement which the Secretary of State has just made. However, I want to express some feeling of disappointment it is thought necessary to resort to the procedure of setting up a task force. This is disappointing in view of the fact that last

fall we held rather extensive hearings in the standing committee on broadcasting, films and assistance to the arts, wherein we received weighty and well articulated briefs from provincial departments of education and adult education associations, and one would have hoped the minister would have been confident enough, armed with these briefs, to proceed a little more quickly.

However, I commend the minister, since he is going to set up a task force, for giving it terms of reference that will really help him to appreciate all the ramifications of the problem. In particular I welcome the reference at the middle of page 2 of the statement, wherein the minister says he is prepared to issue a direction to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation that it soon provide facilities to the departments of education of the provinces so they can quickly set about providing television to the classrooms across the country.

I am sure the minister is well aware that some of the provinces, at least, and adult education associations in the provinces have a deep sense of frustration over what they regard as a long drawn out delay in setting up in this country an E.T.V. capability and the necessary facilities therefor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the hon. Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) for the speed with which he assumed that responsibility.

I would add that doubtless many problems will stem from E.T.V. and the powers conferred by the constitution. Still, thanks to wisdom and knowledge, the Secretary of State will command respect for his views.

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, although at first glance the statement of a minister may look like a step forward, it should not be forgotten that in Quebec it will be considered as another federal intrusion in the fields of exclusively provincial jurisdiction. The statement reads in part as follows:

—however, since the actual broadcasting of these programs remains a responsibility of the federal government, there will be no need to change the long-standing federal policy of not issuing broadcasting licences to the provinces or their agents.

Why add that sentence? If the licence is required to safeguard the special interests of a province and, amongst others, those of the province of Quebec, let one be issued. Let us not get stuck for that. The situation is the