

Government Organization

is responsibility for probing into the aspects of new electronic communications systems which affect public health and safety. This is nothing to be complacent about. If the minister thinks the Department of Transport or the Department of National Health and Welfare have been doing a job with respect to protecting public health and safety as far as radiation from appliances used in the communications industry is concerned, he is mistaken. It is generally acknowledged in the United States, where they have been doing much more research than we have been doing in this field, that a great deal is still unknown as far as electronic radiation is concerned.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Today when there is a virtual explosion of activity in the electronics industry and a proliferation of the amount of radiation, the hazards posed to public safety are growing. Unfortunately, there has been no proportionate increase in the efforts of those responsible for protecting public health and safety to provide against this hazard. I hope the minister will take a personal interest in this aspect at least to the extent of activating some branch of his department and encouraging them to look into it. I thank hon. members for their indulgence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Latulippe: Mr. Chairman, I wish to say a few words on Bill C-173 regarding the government policy in the field of satellites.

We, of the Ralliement Cr ditiste, are in favour of every form of progress. We shall never do enough as far as education and information of the public is concerned. We are in favour of the greatest possible development in this field. We want every possible step to be taken in order to allow us to collect more and more information and to give the population of Canada the adequate services we need in this era.

The minister asked us: What should our policy be in the matter of satellites? Should the state have complete control over satellites or should private enterprises co-operate with the state? Should the state have complete control over all information? Does it have to take all necessary steps regarding satellites?

Mr. Chairman, I would answer that by saying I do not quite agree with our socialist friends who say that the state must take over everything, do everything and control everything. I say that this applies only to the international field. In the national field, private

[Mr. Schreyer.]

enterprise has already successfully passed the test, and it has the right to exist. As a matter of fact, it is able to take care of communications, because in education as well as in communications by satellites, in transport or in technology, private enterprise is very much advanced. I believe we would be taking a step backwards if we removed these fields from the control of private enterprise because it can do the job. Is it not true that in a number of areas, it can provide better administration than the state at half the cost?

In that field, as in others, I believe that private enterprise can provide valuable service; honest competition and more diversity. In the case of a single state station, you push the button and get one program only; however, what we need is the possibility of pushing several buttons and getting several stations.

At the present time, private enterprise is active in the fields of communications and transport, as well as in others, and it plays its part adequately. It pays taxes to the government, contrary to the Crown corporations, since, in their case, the enterprise is the government. The only source of income allowing the government to make up the deficits of those corporations is the taxpayers' contributions, since such corporations do not succeed in administering themselves as economically as private-enterprise.

Mr. Chairman, I am not making that up. As everyone knows it can be proven that private enterprise can operate more economically than the government because it looks after its own business. In private enterprise the owners have control while in state owned companies every citizen is boss and owner. Employees of such undertakings do as they please and that explains why such companies cannot compete with private enterprise.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to financing these satellites or agencies, we approve the millions spend on them by the government, because I do not know exactly how much they will cost. I speak of millions because millions of dollars have already been mentioned. Since it is a question of public funds, those millions should be used only to liquidate the national debt, so as to avoid having to pay endless debts, at interest rates of 8, 9, or 10 per cent on the millions we will have to borrow to build communications satellites, which will benefit a few people at the most. The government must assume its responsibilities in this field. The minister should