

Government Orders

At the same time, Canada made other amendments to the Copyright Act which include substituting the right to broadcast for the right to communicate with the public through telecommunication. Indeed, it had become urgent and essential to redefine musical work. Thanks to this new definition, SOCAN will be better able to collect on behalf of authors and composers royalties for performance and communication of their musical work.

[English]

The tabling of this technical amendment demonstrates the commitment of the Government of Canada to ensure, with the least possible delay, fair and equitable compensation to song writers and composers for the use of their musical works.

[Translation]

Consequently, cable system companies will have to pay SOCAN retransmission rights for specialized and payable services such as Much Music, First Choice, Family Channel and others.

[English]

As for other kinds of uses, it is the Copyright Board that will decide the amount of money to be paid after full and open hearings in which the users, as well as creators, have the chance to explain their points of view.

[Translation]

Moreover, this bill reflects through various provisions the distinction made in the act between the right for the performance in public of works as well as the communication to the public by telecommunication of works. These new provisions will only take effect once the bill receives royal proclamation.

[English]

In conclusion, this amendment is designed to bring immediate benefit to Canadian authors and composers. I would also point out that proceeding with this amendment now will in no way delay this government's commitment to bringing forward the proposed phase 2 amendments to the Copyright Act.

Phase 2 drafting is proceeding as planned and the consultative committee that I announced with the Minister of Communications on March 27, 1991 will start working as soon as possible.

[Translation]

This is a technical bill which will enable us to regulate a situation which is often referred to as a hole in the legislation. It will enable authors and composers to get a fair treatment before we get to all the details contained in the amendments to the Copyright Act.

I therefore ask my colleagues from both sides of this House to pass this legislation quickly which I think is only fair and reasonable. It will not deprive anybody of any right, but will rather regulate a situation that was deplorable.

[English]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I want to say to the minister opposite who has just deposited the bill, along with his colleague the Minister of Communications, that he gave a very clear and succinct perspective to a drafting error that was committed.

There are not many people out there who are interested in copyright. In any event, the assistant House leader knows all about copyright, but I can tell him that there are not a great number of people out there who are totally interested in intellectual property in this refined small sector although it is a vital and important sector. As a matter of fact I think it brings in about \$8 million at this moment. It is of importance to a small and select and very important sector of our society.

I am really very pleased to speak to this bill and support the amendment that is being proposed after we have had hearings. I was most pleased to hear the minister say, right up front and very straightforwardly, that this technical error that was committed will be addressed in committee with a full hearing of interested and involved parties. This will include restaurants and cable people and I believe a whole series of bars, et cetera, which are concerned with the economic impact of this bill. As well, there is the effect that it might have on some legal proceedings that we have been told are a paragon of neutrality in terms of the way this bill has been written. That comes from the department staff and I would believe that they would not mislead us with respect to the concerns of the television people about their proceedings before the court.