

Mr. Fortier: I was going to restrict my question and say: supposing the CRTC assumes jurisdiction over the common carriers and the rates which they charge CATV operators, would that go a long way towards meeting your criticism?

Mr. Boucher: You mean the CRTC?

Mr. Fortier: Yes.

Mr. Boucher: I think this would probably fall into a different category because DOC are conducting expensive telecommunications study which deals in the hardware. To answer the question properly we would have to separate our type of business which falls into two categories. One is hardware for broadcasting and the other one is software, the product that the programme produces.

In our case it is the variety to the antenna for the programme and the extension of the antenna. In that context the hardware will go to the DOC because they are doing research and regulations on that aspect now.

Mr. Fortier: The Department of Communications?

Mr. Boucher: Yes, the Department of Communications.

The Chairman: I have one last question: does the industry suffer from bad public relations?

Mr. Boucher: Mr. Chaston says they are never good enough.

The Chairman: Let me explain that this was not a question I intended to ask but in listening to your oral statement, a copy of which I have here, you say:

"...some press reports on these proposed guidelines have been based upon premature and, in our view, inaccurate conclusions formed by interpreting the CRTC's announcement in the worst possible light. The financial community has also reacted adversely."

And at page 2 you say: "... the CRTC has been persuaded that the Canadian broadcasting industry was in danger of extinction..."

Why have all these things happened?

Mr. Boucher: I think we have been sitting back doing our own thing and we have been amply busy keeping up with technical developments and we have been telling people right along that we had a service to offer but

I am afraid we didn't really tell the world what it was we were doing and we are only recently examining ourselves and now defining a role.

You are quite right. I think the public relations could be better. Of course, any public relations could be.

The Chairman: Mr. Chaston says they could always be better.

Senator McElman: On the matter of rates, Mr. Boucher, I understand that in some of the urban communities now, as new apartment buildings are constructed, they are wired for cable and it is part of the rental agreement that you pay for that service whether you use it or not. Are you familiar with this arrangement?

Mr. Boucher: Well, that sounds a bit familiar to a presentation made to the CRTC. To my knowledge I don't think this is general practice.

Could you comment on that?

Mr. Caston: This would be out of our control. Some landlords, we understand, are doing that.

Senator Prowse: Right in Ottawa.

Senator McElman: You have no arrangement with any of these apartment organizations for such installations?

Mr. Chaston: Not to force it, no. If they want the installation we come to a contractual agreement with the landlord to provide the service on a bulk basis to him for provision to his tenants.

We obviously make such an arrangement but whether he charges for it and how much he charges for it, is a matter for his own concern. It is between him and his tenant.

The Chairman: Gentlemen, in expressing the appreciation of the Committee may I repeat what I said in my opening comments. Yours is a new industry, it is an exciting industry, it has great potential for its owners and its operators and hopefully for the people. This is why we have been particularly grateful to have you here. Thank you so much.

If you stay around for the next day or two and hear the discussions and have anything to add to your brief; or if you would like to make any comments on what you have said today, we would be grateful to receive it. Thank you very much.