

Supply—Transport

Mr. Chairman, why did not the principles enunciated by the Secretary of State on January 25 apply in the Snelgrove case? I should like very much for the minister to give us some information in that connection. The minister's only explanation, which has been interpreted over and over again, was that he said he meant that channel 3 might be taken over by the United States.

Mr. Pickersgill: Not by me.

Mr. Diefenbaker: If channel 3 was not to be filled by a Canadian company, was that not a desperate attempt on his part to cover up the situation where there is no such danger? The minister said that "the United States regulates the use of adjoining channels in the same telecast area", referring to United States stations in the Lake Ontario area using channels 2 and 4.

I ask the minister, why did he place that explanation before the committee entirely without any justification in fact? May I suggest a review of what has taken place in this connection. I am not going back over the fine Italian hand that was revealed here or refer to the manner in which Mr. Snelgrove came to Ottawa, the fact that in Barrie on the day he departed he allegedly made the statement that he was going down to Ottawa to look over things down there and to see that the C.B.C. kept within proper limits in connection with political broadcasts. He came down here and he saw how things were. I want to know why such a departure from the course followed in the past was permitted in this case.

• (4:50 p.m.)

I want to know why there should be such a concentration in the hands of one group. This amounts to one of the most serious situations facing broadcasting today. I see a couple of hon. gentlemen who have just come into parliament for the first time. I have their remarks in this regard. Why should there be such a concentration in the hands of Geoff Stirling, Don Jamieson, Snelgrove and the Waters interests? So far as the Stirling and Jamieson interests are concerned, they have CJON-TV in St. John's, Newfoundland, plus five TV satellites. They have an AM radio station, CJON, in St. John's plus two radio satellites. They have CKWW in Windsor, CKPM in Ottawa and CKGM in Montreal. Where are we heading in this country? I was under the impression that the general course being followed sought to ensure that there should not be such a concentration in the

hands of a few in a field so important as telecommunications.

But I continue. Mr. Stirling, Mr. Snelgrove and Mr. Waters have CKVR-TV Barrie, plus three satellites. The Snelgrove interests have CKBB in Barrie and CKCB in Collingwood, the latter today operating as a satellite but to become a full station. The Snelgrove and Waters interests have CKPT in Peterborough, and Waters owns station CHUM, Toronto, CHUM-FM Toronto, CKLC, Kingston, and CKLC-FM, Kingston. Then there are further interests in which they are joined.

Section 118 of the Radio Act states:

Except with the permission of the Minister (of Transport) given upon the recommendation of the Board of Broadcast Governors, no person shall be licensed to operate more than one station and no license shall be issued to or held by a company owned or controlled by a company holding a license—

What is going to happen here? With this group of Liberal partisans, what chance is there of completely objective reporting and discussion of the news and the problems of Canada? Yet this list is to be added to. I say to the minister that I would expect him to take a strong stand against this sort of thing. Political friends are political friends but this situation cannot be justified by any argument. The hon. gentleman tried by an argument which was specious to pretend that the government of Canada was standing up fearlessly for Canadian rights. But the guide lines would indicate that political considerations were far more important and, indeed, that they are entirely the explanation for what is taking place. After all the arguments which have been advanced, I ask the minister, a man who never hides his views under a bushel: What will his attitude be regarding the award of this plum in the circumstances which have been set out so clearly by those who have preceded me?

During the course of this discussion we have covered many of the problems of the Department of Transport. It is a large, difficult and trying department. Indeed, I sometimes wonder whether what the Prime Minister said yesterday might not also be applied to the Minister of Transport—"I am so busy that I have not got time to think". Now that he has heard the views of members of the committee on this problem and read what has appeared in newspapers not unfavourable to the Liberal government, as he must have done, what is his attitude? Is he not beginning to wonder whether this thing should be