

Radio Relay Licences

is to be regarded as one that is subject to review in the government's over-all study of Canadian communications needs.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank the minister for giving me a copy of this statement well in advance of the time of delivery. I appreciate this very much. However, this brings me to the end of the nice things I can say about the minister and the statement. I quite understand why the minister would want to take off the rather battered steel helmet he wears as Postmaster General and put on the more modern efficient hat of Minister of Communications. I think the House would appreciate a few more statements in the House by him as Postmaster General about the efficiency of the Post Office. This may be irrelevant so I shall not say more about it.

The fact is that when one looks at this statement, as is the case in respect of some other statements—I am not trying to drive ministers away from making essential statements—one wonders whether it was really necessary. I shall just read one sentence from part of the statement:

However, the growing social and economic importance of this form of telecommunications requires that more attention be placed on other criteria if we are to assure an orderly growth of the Canadian communications system which will assure maximum social benefits and minimum of wasteful duplication of investment.

The minister stopped there but the statement I have goes on to say, "In a field where resources are both scarce and essential for the development of the full potential of all segments of Canadian society."

These are stirring words for the Canadian people. If the minister means that in his program he will take into account the public interest, that is all that needed to be said. We would have thought that all government departments would have done this and would continue to do it, although we have some doubts about some government departments at the present time. Consequently I cannot really bubble over with enthusiasm about this statement. There is one part which I do think is different and needs some further comment:

That there is some public interest and need to be served by the creation of the new facility.

One wonders how this should be read in light of what has been said by the Chairman of the CRTC in connection with microwave facilities for cablevision. I know that a large percentage of Canadians in the large metropolitan areas of southern Canada are

[Mr. Kierans.]

already polluted by the television and radio broadcasts coming into Canada from the United States, but it is the poor people of central and northern Canada who continue to be the objects of the forced infusion of Canadian culture by the authority who should be allowed to decide whether they should have Canadian culture particularly or whether or not they ultimately would like to have it with some variety. When there is a conflict of interest as to how well the public interest is served by the creation of the new facility between the Minister and the CRTC and their interpretation of the Broadcasting Act, one wonders with whom the decision will lie and what will be the result. This is a question which should be answered, particularly in light of what we heard this morning from Mr. Juneau, the chairman of CRTC.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, it was good of the minister to send us this morning the text of his statement. Fortunately he sent it by messenger rather than by mail because, judging by the way the mail is coming and going in my home town of Winnipeg, if he had sent it by mail it would not be here until next week.

I believe we all agree with the basic principles which the minister enunciated as the policy of the government. We can support the idea that not only the commercial and technical aspects of applications will be considered but also the whole question of the public interest. This we can endorse. We will, of course, be watching very carefully how the minister and the department interpret this principle in the actual granting of applications.

One thing which is of concern to us and which we think has not been resolved is that the making of decisions with regard to applications for facilities of this kind seems to be divided among the Department of Communications, the Department of Transport and the CRTC. We think this is not a good thing. We think the government should clear up the grey area and specify who has the responsibility because until that is done it will be very difficult to assess who has made the mistake, if one has been made.

[Translation]

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

MONTREAL—CONFLICT IN MAIL TRANSPORT—
REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO
MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I solicit the indulgence of the House