

*Telesat Canada Act*

establishment of a communication satellite which, we hope, will certainly enhance the culture of all Canadians.

Referring to that meeting in Washington, I read another news release that said:

A conflict between efficiency and democracy in the operation of an international communications network by satellite might delay considerably an agreement at the conference which has now been going on for a month in Washington and is due to end on March 21.

I feel that if the minister had asked delegates from all the parties to go to Washington, an agreement would probably already have been drawn up for Canada; and today we would not have to discuss this amendment which can only delay the progress of this telecommunications satellite.

The article added, and I quote:

Canada and what seems to be the majority—  
from the point of view of ideas,  
—of the 66 delegations favoured a "tripartite" structure of administration and operation.

So, personally, even if there was no such thing as electoral funds, I would not speak of a tripartite undertaking. I would merely say: Let the private companies do their duty. They sometimes work miracles and they would be in a position to give us excellent service. But as we too have that worry, we also have reason to ask ourselves many questions. That is why we ask the minister, when he has other meetings, when discussions are held to decide this or that company will broadcast across Canada, tomorrow, through the telecommunications satellite, to kindly invite us that we might know what strings are being pulled behind the scenes. Then we can doubtless convince our good friends of the New Democratic party to want a private company, for they too will have ceased to worry about contributions swelling up election funds.

Again I wish to point out to the minister that I am not accusing him at all. I know him to be sincere enough to want some day to put an end to those election funds, which would keep us once and for all from having any doubts, and that is why, as regards the amendment before us today, I would like especially to ask him to consider seriously the question once more in order that the most learned people or company will be chosen to ensure the operation of this corporation.

Besides we can say that the satellite era has barely begun in Canada, that it is already—and it is perhaps not the amendment before us today—probably the greatest bone of contention between Ottawa and Quebec.

If we ourselves had moved an amendment, it would have been to ask that Quebec have, at least in the education field, the authority in those things.

But since we do not want to delay the debate and we are in favour of setting up the corporation, we earnestly ask the minister today to consider the possibility of having rather a company which will allow us, as in France, among other countries, to share broadcasts via the satellite *Symphonie*. Then the expenditure would surely be greatly reduced, because since the satellite will be orbiting over the equator, the band beamed towards Quebec will automatically entail no expense, and we would not have to incur an expense of the order of \$60 million, let alone all the expenses that private enterprise, might be spared, in order that we go ahead in this field.

Moreover, the concern of the New Democratic party is probably due to the debt of Canada. I read recently that up to January 15 last, the national debt, including the debts guaranteed by the government, totalled \$23,574 million, of which \$6,361 million are in savings bonds.

• (12:10 p.m.)

If there is such a debt in Canada, is it not to put the cart before the horse to want to spend a further amount of \$60 million for a satellite which could undoubtedly be operated by private interests, as long as things would not be rushed unduly, since France is already in a position to broadcast freely through the *Symphonie* satellite?

Now, I wonder why there is such a rush, and I also ask the representatives of the New Democratic party why they did consider Canada's debt instead, introduce an amendment to that effect and wait until private enterprise would enable us to meet our requirements within a few years.

I would also point out in my following comments that at present, because Quebec is concerned about the turn of events and is aware that the federal government wants to overtake them in that field it probably also wants to create a state-owned company.

That is why I urge the minister to be very cautious. The battle will certainly be tougher against a Quebec company than against well-disposed individuals like us.

We offer our co-operation to the minister. We contend that by putting first things first, by collecting all the data available throughout the world in order to work out a permanent plan, and by considering also the economic situation prevailing in Canada, we would be