

*Radio Act***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

RADIO ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Jean Charest (for the Minister of Communications) moved that Bill C-6, an Act to amend the Radio Act and certain other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mrs. Finestone: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I would like some direction from the Chair. This Radio Bill which you have just indicated was on the Order Paper is an important Bill in the history and evolution of our radio communications in Canada. I had perhaps made an incorrect presumption, but I did believe that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Hon. Minister of Communications (Mr. Edwards) had some observations to make and I was prepared, as was my colleague, I believe, in the New Democratic Party, to make some comment in this regard.

Could you perhaps enable us to understand just what has taken place that the House is moving to the next Bill?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I put the question to the House, I read the motion, and at that time no one rose to speak. The Parliamentary Secretary rose after that. I am quite prepared to revert to Bill C-6 should there be unanimous consent of the House. I did not in any way intend to have this important Bill go through the House without anyone debating it. The question was there but no one rose to speak. Obviously, I had to continue.

Mr. Charest: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. From my understanding of how the debate was to proceed, the Government is ready to speak on the Bill. My understanding is that there will be a speaker for the Official Opposition and a speaker for the New Democratic Party. We have no objection to reverting to the time where you, Madam Speaker, put the question to the House and, if there is unanimous consent to do so, I

think you will probably find that the Parliamentary Secretary is more than ready to speak on this piece of legislation.

Mr. Prud'homme: Madam Speaker, I appreciate what the Minister has just said. Our critic was having a discussion because of the events of this morning. The Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) was right behind the curtains speaking with me. I am ready to take at least half the responsibility that the Hon. Member did not run fast enough to participate in the debate. There is agreement already and I hope you will recognize it, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I appreciate the comments made by the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis. Even though I did see the Hon. Member for Mount Royal in her seat in the House, the Hon. Member did not rise at the time.

There seems to be unanimous consent. I am pleased to revert to Bill C-6 and I will recognize whoever rises to speak.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I think I have contributed to the problem in that when I do rise I have a long way to go.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Edwards: On April 12, the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) tabled a Bill to amend the Radio Act. This initiative is required to ensure responsible management of the radio frequency spectrum. The radio frequency spectrum is an important limited international resource. No one nation owns the resource but it is necessary to every nation's economic well-being.

Radio frequencies provide the means to communicate by electromagnetic waves. They are the naturally occurring building blocks of communications devices, systems and networks.

In 1899 Marconi invented wireless transmission by radio waves. By 1905 it was obvious that international regulation was necessary to permit the orderly growth of radio communications. It became mandatory for all ships to carry radio equipment which met these regulations and would contribute to the saving of lives at sea. Because of the International Telecommunications Union, international standards such as distress frequencies and the famous signal for distress, SOS, were introduced.