

know that technical answers are not going to close the gap in this tremendous invasion of our personal lives, and it is not the right approach. As well, technical fixes would be strictly band-aid solutions, only to be overtaken by new developments and new undertakings.

• (1730)

As far as this bill is concerned, we should say once and for all that its recognition of privacy protection as one of its objectives is most welcome and is a welcome beginning. There is a clause in Bill C-62 that would be very important for the CRTC and it needs to be included in here because it would give us some power and would allow us to have a little bit more control.

The question in my mind is whether the provisions in this bill go as far as they should or as far as they could. Or do they go too far in the sense beyond technology, but the kind of punishment that fits the crime? We all know that having an objective is one thing, but reaching it and finding the method to block it is another. That is why I have qualified my support for this bill.

I might go so far as to say one day that it might be a constitutional problem that we would want to look at. Whatever emerges from this process, I do not think that without a set of guidelines or standards we would be facing the issue squarely, honestly and with the kind of real intent that is required.

I believe that the information that is supplied to customers when they purchase these goods is not adequate. They should be made aware of what they are really buying and the purpose for which the telecommunications equipment that they purchase is to be used. Not only should there be this informed consent on the part of the purchaser, but cost neutrality is in question here. Customers should not have to pay to preserve privacy they already enjoy. Mr. Phillips says caller identification is a very good example of this issue. Until ordered otherwise by the CRTC, telephone companies proposed to charge extra for subscribers who wanted to preserve the anonymity of their telephone numbers. We talked about that in this House and we challenged the minister on that particular issue.

Government Orders

What about the cost of encryption? Is that not an obligation if we want to maintain the privacy of the airwaves. The only way we can do that is through encryption of those airwaves so that our phone can be protected and have a privacy aspect. It is a very costly undertaking. The estimate is in the billions. Should we have the obligation to provide complete privacy? Can we protect it without it being so extraordinarily expensive?

Perhaps we need to look at this obligation very closely when we go into committee and see what the options and concerns are. Do not forget that cellular telephone is really a radio. Mr. Speaker, if you encrypt it from your chair and want to speak to whomever you want to speak to with your encrypted cellular telephone then that does not necessarily mean that the receiver of your phone call, who may not have an encrypted phone, is protected in the sense of privacy. Therefore your communication, which you thought was protected, is not necessarily protected. This is a very important matter. I am going to come to the issue in Quebec in a moment, but a lot of us remember with a great deal of sadness how our lack of understanding of the technology has not been met.

The third concept that I want to talk about is about openness or transparency. Customers have the right to be told what it is they are purchasing. They are not told when they buy that cellular telephone that they are buying a radio. I suggest that such equipment must be so labelled. Customers have to be told what it is all about. They have to be advised that there are scramblers out there and that whatever they say can be listened to and overheard and can cause great harm in the course of their lives, depending on what issue they are discussing. This is a watch-dog call that I am putting in here.

• (1735)

It means we must have, through this minister and this bill, some kind of watch-dog process. The minister announced a supposed watch-dog process and called it the Telecommunications Privacy Protection Agency. It became a sleeping tiger. The mean-sounding watch-dog that the minister announced was really a great big failure.

What was supposed to bring Canadians everything they wished for in terms of peace of mind at the end of their telephones was a sham. The minister did not say