

Telesat Canada Act

considering the welfare of the people of Canada, and I submit that a company making the representations this company has made ought to be dealt with in an appropriate way. I do not know the term one applies to companies, but if it were a union it ought to be decertified.

• (12:50 p.m.)

The proposal of Trans-Canada Telephone suggests that the public be excluded from participating in the operation of Canada's first communications satellite. Immediately a company that is supposedly a good corporate citizen suggests that, surely the government should see, if it is so good that in the view of Trans-Canada the public should be excluded, that the public should own it lock, stock and barrel. I believe there is still time for that if the minister has the stamina to withstand the substantial pressures which I understand are being brought to bear upon him outside the house. A public body is now in the process of deciding whether the application of Bell Canada for an increase in rates is justified. This will be determined by the members of that board, and the result will indicate whether we have proved the point we are trying to make.

I wish to quote from an editorial in the *Toronto Telegram* of May 7, 1969. The chairman of Trans-Canada told the Commons Broadcasting Committee:

—the cost to the telephone companies of \$5 million a year to use the satellite facilities will actually be "a subsidy" paid by Bell Canada and its associated companies.

Almost in the same breath he asks:

—that the telephone firms and other "initial participants" be given exclusive rights to the satellite's use "in exchange" for the charges to be imposed by Telesat Canada. This is the private-public company that will administer the satellite operations.

As you go through this article you realize the implications inherent in the terms they are speaking about. It is completely unacceptable to have a Canadian corporation state to a responsible federal government that Telesat should not be publicly owned. I sincerely suggest that the minister should take a very close look at the over-all situation. For the fifth time I urge the minister to accept the amendment of the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. Saltsman).

In the time I have left, I wish to refer briefly to the original sponsor of this amendment, the hon. member for Selkirk. In his

[Mr. Skoberg.]

opening words on April 14, as recorded at page 7502 of *Hansard*, the hon. member said:

Mr. Speaker, ever since word went out that the government of Canada was thinking of establishing a space communications satellite, I have supported that notion enthusiastically.

Every member of this party supports that notion enthusiastically. We will continue to support it as long as Clause 3 is altered in accordance with our amendment to make it entirely a crown corporation. The hon. member for Selkirk went on to say:

—we should want to assist the Canadian scientific community to develop the expertise connected with space, with communication by satellite, and that we should be taking an important step toward giving our scientific community something concrete to work on, something that will give that community an important place in the world.

I draw to the minister's attention that the people we have in this field are experts. It is not necessary to go outside to obtain expertise. Before he introduced his amendment at that time the hon. member stated:

I cannot disagree for one second with the minister in his statement that this is indeed our central nervous system and that his department is responsible for administering to the needs of this system. Therefore, it is completely unacceptable that this central nervous system should somehow not be controlled by us.

At that time the hon. member moved the following amendment:

That Bill C-184 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this house consideration should be given to establishing the proposed Telesat Canada as a crown corporation, with provision for participation therein by the governments of the provinces as well as by the government of Canada.

I believe that sets out in a very few words the position of our party. I believe it shows that we believe in setting up a corporation under public control to ensure that the returns from the system do not go to the private carriers but directly to the general public of this country. I am sure all hon. members appreciate the fact that Canada is a nation we can be proud of as long as we retain ownership of it. We should not allow private corporations connected with companies in the United States and elsewhere to gain control of the over-all operation of this corporation.

I believe it has been set out clearly that there is room for conflict with regard to control and regulation. If the corporation is set up as a crown entity, this will ensure there will be no problems on questions such as foreign ownership and participation. In addition, the regulation of this corporation and