

a French 24-hour all-news service. In fact, we voiced our disappointment when the CRTC rejected Radio-Canada's initial application. It seems that Radio-Canada is now preparing a new application which, I am sure, will meet the CRTC's objective criteria, so that Canada's French-speaking audience will have access to the same kind of service that Anglophones enjoy at the present time.

Francophones in this country, Mr. Speaker, did not appreciate the fact that during the Meech Lake talks and the crisis with the Mohawks in Oka, they had to rely on CBC News World in English, since we did not have the equivalent service in French. Bearing this in mind, I earnestly hope Radio-Canada will soon be able to submit its proposal to the CRTC.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition motions now before the House are in fact aimed at enshrining in the Act a formal obligation for the CBC to continue to provide four services it provides at the present time, including Radio Canada International, the Northern service referred to by the hon. member for Western Arctic, the Parliamentary Channel, the all-news service and as well as one that has yet to be created, the French news channel. Or will it be a bilingual channel? Why not?

At this time, Mr. Speaker, none of these services is part of the mandate of the CBC as defined in the Act. Although the present legislation contains a provision under which the Corporation, as an agent of Her Majesty, is to offer an international service, Radio Canada International, a service offered under this specific provision, was established by order in council. Would it not be appropriate to enshrine all these services and others as well, Mr. Speaker, in the mandate given the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation? Of course members on this side of the House agree these are all excellent, quality services, and we would like to see them maintained, unless due to unforeseen circumstances the Corporation had to change its priorities.

What could these famous circumstances be? The first example that springs immediately to mind is the proposition considered by this House in recent months whereby a consortium of cable companies might broadcast parliamentary debates. Should the House be prevented from accepting this suggestion which would enable the CBC to save money, something which would undeniably make for judicious use of resources because the CBC was given the legislative mandate to carry the parliamentary proceedings?

### *Government Orders*

[English]

What about the all-news service? The CBC started the service calculating that it would be entirely self-supporting and it was licensed on that basis. The CBC obviously had no desire to provide such a service if it would siphon resources from the basic service. The government's acquisitions in this new venture were similarly based on the CBC commitment that all-news would not siphon resources away from the basic service which, as we all know, is stretched to the limit now. Should we now insert a provision into the legislation which would permit exactly this to happen?

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, CBC International is altogether different from northern services, or from the 24-hour French news service, CBC Newsworld and the parliamentary broadcasting system. What is the difference, Mr. Speaker? Quite simply, all these networks are first and foremost serving their Canadian audience, whereas CBC International is intended almost exclusively for Canadians abroad and listeners in foreign countries. Here is one example.

CBC International reaches millions of listeners in eastern countries, particularly the Soviet Union, the Baltic States, and Czechoslovakia. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Canadians might be surprised to learn that CBC International attracts more listeners than the CBC network does right here in Canada. This is why CBC International has always rated so high.

When in Cuba recently I had an opportunity to talk to ordinary Cuban citizens and they told me their only reliable sources of information in Spanish are the CBC International network and the Voice of America.

I think this international service must be maintained. As I suggested during the legislative committee hearings on Bill C-40, it should be given official legislative recognition so that no government—this or any future government—would be able to abolish it through an order in council. The government would have to debate the issue in Parliament because this is the kind of service offered by nearly all countries of the world.

In this respect I think a difference has to be made between CBC International and the other services. There is something I want to repeat so that it be quite clear. We on this side of the House—and I think I speak for all my colleagues—want early CRTC approval for the French version of the all news channel. But, and I end on this note, Mr. Speaker, CBC management did not need legislation to set up the CBC Newsworld network, and I do not see why we would need a law to have the same service in French.