

recommendations dealing with the extension of basic television service to northern and remote communities. In addition, it outlines specific recommendations for extending native programming. I wish to confine my remarks to these two aspects of the report.

Although I live in a far different environment than the hon. member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson), it seems rather strange, living in the heartland of southwestern Ontario, within about 35 miles of three radio stations, that at six or 6.15 o'clock in the evening we can only receive one of them, though we can receive a multiplicity of United States stations which increase their power output after the dinner hour. I sympathize with him and his problems in the Western Arctic, as well as those of the hon. member for Skeena in this regard.

Although certain aspects of native programming impinge upon each other, it is important to make a distinction between the needs of native people and those of other Canadians in rural and remote parts of Canada. The native peoples of Canada have special programming needs, particularly in regard to the cultural impact of television. Native people themselves recognize the potential of the television medium for supporting their waning cultures in the face of strong influences exerted by the predominantly non-native society. It is for this reason I shall discuss native programming as an issue apart from the extension of basic television service.

I am quite familiar with satellite receiver stations. As a matter of fact, a particular company in my constituency is pushing hard to have these installed throughout southwestern Ontario at the present time, as an alternative to cable television, to bring in satellite television in the larger apartment complexes, hotels and various other institutions. I am not sure this was the use intended for those satellite stations when they were first launched. If we are to ensure Canadian content, I believe we should take a very hard look at what is happening in this regard. Certainly the minister should be commended for the stand he has taken.

In recent years there has been a growing public awareness of the technological possibilities for satellite-delivered television. The falling costs of television receiver-only earth stations has meant that northern and remote communities have been looking to satellites as a desirable mode for delivering a range of television viewing. However, the lack of an alternative Canadian service has led to the installation of a number of unlicensed television receiver-only earth stations in rural and remote parts of the country. These have been aimed at American communications satellites in violation of international agreements by which both Canada and the United States are bound.

Therefore, much of the emphasis of the Therrien report has been directed to determining how a variety of television service might be extended expeditiously to northern and remote parts of Canada. This emphasis was reinforced as the committee defined "northern" and "remote" as applying to all parts of Canada where essential needs have yet to be met. Therefore, such a definition includes many parts of Canada which could not be categorized in normal circumstances as either northern or remote.

Broadcasting

There is a sizeable segment of our population with little or no choice of available television programming. In fact, there are 2.8 million Canadians, or 11 per cent of the total population, who only have access to two or fewer television stations. Moreover, these people are to be found in all parts of the country and include 31 per cent of the residents of Atlantic Canada and 22 per cent of the people living in the prairie provinces, as well as over 50 per cent of northern Canadians. The service afforded these 2.8 million Canadians is in stark contrast to what the majority of urban Canadians enjoy—on the average the latter have access to between ten to 15 television stations.

In recognition of this fact, the Therrien committee indicated the following on the first page of its report:

Our first unanimous conclusion is that immediate action must be taken to meet the needs of the many Canadians who believe that, as regards broadcasting, they are being treated as second-class citizens.

The report goes on to make six recommendations bearing directly on the extension of television services. Its first recommendation is that the CRTC should immediately call for licence applications for the delivery, in remote and underserved areas, of a range of Canadian satellite television services which would be attractive to Canadian audiences. Its second recommendation is that the federal government, as a purely interim measure of an experimental nature, should arrange and pay for one composite public service of alternative entertainment programming to be delivered by satellite to remote and underserved areas as authorized by the CRTC. Its third recommendation is that immediate action should be taken to ensure that national radio services be made available in all parts of Canada as soon as possible.

Its fifth recommendation was that the extension of broadcasting services to northern and remote areas must not rely upon subsidies from pay TV. Its sixth recommendation was that it must be recognized residents in remote areas may have to contribute to the cost of receiving all but the national broadcasting services, and such contributions must be kept down to the lowest feasible amounts. Its seventh recommendation was that approval for the introduction of any new satellite service must take into account the essential need to provide, maintain or expand facilities for community and regional services. Its eighth recommendation indicated that planning for the broadcasting system of the future must be flexible enough to accommodate technological, legislative and structural change.

Immediately upon the tabling of this report, the chairman of the CRTC gave the assurance that the commission would act quickly on the extension of television services to northern and remote parts of the country. And they did act quickly. On October 16, the CRTC issued a call for licence applications for the extension of services to remote and underserved communities, such services to include the provision of a variety of radio and television programming services from Canadian networks, Canadian stations and other Canadian sources which will be attractive to those living in rural and remote communities. Applications are being received until December 1. The com-