

PROVINCE

McGeer likes federal offer on cable TV

Canadian Press

B.C. Science and Communications Minister Pat McGeer says he welcomes an offer by the federal government to relinquish control over cable television.

Federal Justice Minister Jean Chretien made the offer during constitutional talks in Montreal Tuesday at which B.C. also was told Ottawa is willing to give up its regulatory authority for B.C. Telephone Co.

However, McGeer indicated that Chretien's B.C. Tel proposition is unacceptable because Ottawa is advancing it as a bargain-

ing point rather than an outright concession.

"The move of the federal government is of no constitutional significance in view of the fact that most of the other provinces either own or have control of their telephone companies," the minister said.

McGeer said that the federal government's move out of regulating cable television systems and reception of cable communications of any kind is a breakthrough.

The minister had provoked the ire of federal Communications Minister Francis Fox last month when he set up an earth-



McGeer

... raps Tel deal

station satellite receiver on the lawn of the Legislature to pirate signals from U.S. satellite television stations.

Fox had maintained that the licence McGeer had obtained from the federal department of communications only enabled him to pick up Canadian satellite television signals.

McGeer insists that the federal Radio Act does not preclude him from picking up American satellite signals. And he says those U.S. stations which transmit the signals gave him permission to pick them up.

Fox had warned that if McGeer continued to use the receiver his licence would be revoked, but he later backed down.

tional or international events.

The next item on the agenda was the softball league asking for a grant in lieu of charges for the use of Royal Athletic Park for an exhibition game Saturday against the Vancouver Canucks.

Proceeds from the game will go to the G.R. Pearkes Clinic for handicapped children.

Bell backs finance switch

Canadian Press

B.C. taxpayers will have to rely on the background and principles of the deputy finance minister in approving authorized government spending, deputy finance minister Larry Bell said Wednesday.

Bell told the Legislature's public accounts committee the administrative advantages of having the independent comptroller-general reporting directly to the deputy minister rather than the minister "far outweigh the disadvantages."

He offered personal assurances of his integrity, but opposition MLAs

questioned whether Bell's successor would abuse the increased powers he is seeking under a finance ministry reorganization.

Earlier, Comptroller-General Lionel Bonnell testified that Bell was illegally trying to force him to report to the deputy minister. This prompted Finance Minister Hugh Curtis, who appointed Bell, to say he would change the law.

Bell said the comptroller-general reports to the deputy minister in all other provinces except one. In that province, both jobs are held by one person.

He said only the provincial treasury board, headed by the finance minister, can overrule a comptroller-general who must authorize payments after they are approved by the various ministries.

Industry Minister Don Phillips noted that B.C. has an auditor-general empowered to examine the accounts and records relating to all public expenditures.

But Stuart Leggatt (NDP—Coquitlam-Moody) said the auditor-general notices mistakes only after they have been made.



Bell

... 'trust me'

Softball league timing bad, grant plea fails

The Heywood Avenue Senior Men's Open Softball League might have snared

The Heywood Avenue Senior Men's Open Softball League might have snared a \$300 grant from city council's finance committee Thursday if it hadn't been for the reaffirmation of a particular grant policy a few minutes earlier.

The aldermen had just renewed endorsement of a long-standing policy of giving grants to local sports clubs for hosting only na-

tional or international events.

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CORRECTION

Please note in Zeller's Flyer Thurs. — Sat., July 10-12, that the Flip Over Chair and Sofas advertised on page 7 of our "Zellers Wake up to Savings" flyer will not be available in Zellers Victoria.

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