

PARLIAMENTARY TELEVISION COVERAGE

Minority Report by:
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After serving several months on the committee and seeing that the vast majority of witnesses, either individuals or representatives of various groups, either from the political or non-political arena, either from private or public orientation, believed with varying degrees of support in the merit of this proposal, I am prepared to endorse most of the report as compiled by the Committee.

My preference would be to have the CBC provide enhanced coverage for Canadians free of charge. However, in light of present widely-known circumstances, I believe this not only to be unlikely but also improbable. This stance is given added credence when both Mr. P. Watson and Mr. G. Veilleux of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) wholeheartedly endorse the CPaC proposal.

Two issues to which I wish to express concern on behalf of my party are the issues of payment of employees engaged under the CPaC proposal and payment for the Parliamentary Television Service by Canadians.

1. **PAYMENT OF EMPLOYEES** — I recommend that employees presently engaged by the CBC or the House of Commons in providing television coverage be provided unconditional security in their present positions and that additional employees be afforded commensurate salaries with their counterparts employed by other networks. The partnership between Cableco and the CBC should not be construed as an affront to present CBC union employees and only comparable pay scales would negate this perception. Professionals delivering similar services should necessarily earn similar recompense.
2. **PAYMENT BY CANADIANS FOR THE TELEVISIED PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE** — One must question rather strenuously whether or not Canadians should be expected to pay to watch their Parliamentarians at work or to view the machinations of their government, given its lack of intrinsic entertainment value. Mr. Peter Desbarats, Dean of Journalism from the University of Western Ontario rightly points out that proceedings are free to spectators in the House of Commons in a "live" setting so it seems inappropriate for viewers to pay for televised coverage.

To isolate this consideration from recent developments in the costs to cable subscribers would be inappropriate.

The proposed fee scale of eight cents per month for years one and two, nine cents for years three and four and ten cents for year five, seems inconsequential when considered in isolation and particularly when one acknowledges the significantly enhanced programming envisioned by the proposal.

However, given the widely accepted philosophy by the vast majority of Canadians who accepted the invitation to comment on the proposal that payment for this service was not only undesirable but