

Business of Supply

not seem to reach the ears of the press gallery, and if a system could be devised for assuring authentic press coverage, I should like to hear of it.

Mr. Jamieson: Is that just radio?

Mr. Baldwin: No, it is radio and television. What takes place in this house is not always of major importance, but it is essential that we be here as a mirror to reflect the aims and aspirations of the people we represent. We must consider ways and means of entering into a complete dialogue so that the people of Canada know what is happening. They can then tell us what they think about it and what they wish done.

For that reason, I am glad to make this final suggestion that this house should give some thought to this matter. There will be many debates and some time will elapse before a decision is made, but we might consider some experimentation by improvising with committees. An excellent choice would have been the justice committee which was dealing with a very important subject of great value, concern and interest to many Canadians. I read the transcript of the proceedings of the justice committee and I feel television and radio broadcasting of the proceedings of that committee would have been most useful.

The public would also be very interested to know what is going on in the public accounts committee. This committee receives very good press coverage, but I think this would be an excellent committee for radio and television broadcasting. Having done that with the aid of experts, consideration could be given to bringing into the house on an experimental basis, cameras and microphones to see what needed to be done technically and the degree of inconvenience that would be caused. Possibly a committee should be set up to study this matter.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, I have some reluctance about this position but while I am sorry I had to change my mind, I have done so. In my opinion, this house can no longer afford not to deal with the problem facing us at the present time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. member for York South and the President of the Privy Council. I might point out the practice has been to recognize first the speakers of the opposition parties on allotted days. I recognize the hon. member for York South.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I am not sure my contribution will be as entertaining

as that of the President of the Privy Council, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of my colleagues, I want to say we unequivocally support the idea that this parliament be brought up to date. I am a little disappointed at the degree of caution which the hon. member for Peace River exhibited in making his suggestion. He seemed anxious that we go through some experimental period of introducing radio and television into the chamber. I think we are out of date in our caution on this point. Obviously, radio and television are as important a media of information as is the printed word.

A primary media of information such as television should not be excluded from this chamber. Every day we are chased out to the rotunda by representatives of radio and television networks and asked to say something in 30 or 45 seconds, which is then edited to 15 or 20 seconds. A practice such as that is not useful and is not representative of parliament. As the hon. member for Peace River pointed out, we have had experiences with members of the government saying something to the house which was not very clear, often a non-answer, and then in the rotunda they make their position clear to the people of Canada. I do not blame them for doing that. If the people can get clarity from some of the remarks which are made, they are much better at it than I am. The people of Canada should have an opportunity of hearing what these ministers say in the House of Commons, not outside in the rotunda. The cameras and radio receivers should be in this chamber to record what is said.

We are all amateurs in this area, Mr. Speaker. But I think there are three areas of concern with regard to the use of television or electronic media to report the events of this house. What is sent across the air waves and recorded by the camera screens should be important and relevant information. It is easy for the camera to pick out members who have closed their eyes because they are in profound contemplation to give the impression outside that there is another reason for their eyes being closed. It is easy for the camera to catch members, who because of their seniority in this house have developed a capacity for reading a newspaper, listening to the speaker and following what they read in the newspaper without one interfering in the slightest with the other. It is also easy to pick out members writing something, although this may be the only opportunity to draft a letter; but these are not the things in which the