

Routine Proceedings

but this implies a cost in order to ensure that everybody gets the same information.

• (1300)

We had to take all those factors into account to come up with a report such as today's which, of course, is not perfect because it will not enable us to meet all the requests. But given our resources and the present situation in the country, I believe that we have struck a balance with this report. Once it will be implemented, we will certainly find flaws that we will be able to correct and we will also be able to improve on it. I hope that with time all our proceedings, particularly at the committees, will be broadcast, as is already the case here in the House of Commons.

I would also like to explain to those who listen to us, because we are talking to all our listeners, that the objective of this report is to inform Canadians and to keep them aware of all the activities of their members and of the Government of Canada. The idea is to make sure that Canadians are well informed, and there is no doubt that this costs money. Let us take the House of Commons. Right now, there are not very many of us in the House. But this is not to say that the members that are not here are not doing anything or are on vacation. They sit on committees, they attend meetings or they work in their offices. Our job does not only involve being here in the House and taking part in debates. There are other places where debates take place.

So it would now be appropriate to tell Canadians about the committees that exist. We often talk about committees, but I believe that we should name them and explain how they work. Their work is important. I will not go back and explain how they used to work, but right now our committees are divided into envelopes. For instance, the human resources sector includes among others, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, on which eight members sit, five representing the government, two representing the Official Opposition and one representing the New Democratic Party. There is also the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons; the Standing Committee on Multiculturalism and Citizenship; the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women; and the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration.

For each sector, there are also two legislative committees. Those are standing committees that can call ministers and that discuss the activities of depart-

ments. However, we have set up these legislative committees specifically to study bills after second reading to speed up the work of the House.

The other sector that I would like to tell you about is the natural resources envelope. That sector includes the Standing Committee on Agriculture, the Standing Committee on Energy, Mines and Resources, the Standing Committee on Environment, the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries, as well as two legislative committees.

There is also the economics envelope which includes the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, the Standing Committee on Finance—obviously this economics envelope must include the committee, on finance—the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Regional and Northern Development. There is also the transport committee, which is also very important, as well as two legislative committees.

Finally, there is the departmental envelope which includes the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations—

Mr. Boudria: A very good committee.

Mr. Gagliano: My colleague does an exceptional job. There is, of course, the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General, the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, the Standing Committee on Official Languages, as well as two legislative committees.

As you can see, we have many committees meeting from Monday to Friday while this House is sitting. Some even start earlier than the House at times. The Canadian people are not aware of the important work accomplished by these committees. I should point out that most of the time witnesses of national stature are invited. National groups come and testify before them to give members of both sides of this House very important suggestions on how to manage the country, how to look to the future, how Canada can become a more prosperous country on the cutting edge. And only members of this House and a few reporters—from the print media—are allowed to attend the meetings and take notes. On the other hand, the electronic media, such as radio and television, are not allowed in, except perhaps just before the meeting is called to order to get some footage for the evening news.

Regarding the committee report before us, there is no doubt that the members of this House, as every-