

Broadcasting House Proceedings

strongly approve of so much of what might be done and can be done by broadcasting the proceedings of this House, I would be very unhappy unless there were some constraint in respect thereof and the dangers that exist were taken into account. I make this suggestion, Mr. Speaker, in the hope that some time might be given to allow the debate to continue. It may well be possible to frame a motion which does not in any way restrict what the government is proposing to do, but which does take into account the potential dangers that I have tried to point out.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, given the importance of the subject you have dealt with in the House of Commons, that is whether or not the motion on resolution No. 8 was acceptable, I would like to make the following point: resolution No. 8 is in fact a statement of principle. It comes down to saying that the House approves, in a general way, the radio and television broadcasting of its proceedings and of the proceedings of its committees on the basis of principles similar to those that govern the publication of the debates. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is a resolution which on the whole is non limitative and which constitutes acceptance in principle of the television broadcasting of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees. The resolution does not indicate any application date. In the second paragraph, it says that there will be a committee.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the creation of this committee is precisely what should incite you, with all due respect, to accept the resolution submitted by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker). For the very simple reason that the government motion proposes:

That a special committee, consisting of Mr. Speaker and seven other members to be named at a later date, be appointed to supervise the implementation of this resolution.

The first part of the motion amounts to a mere approval of the broadcasting of the debates of the House of Commons to allow Canadians to know how we are working. In the same breath the government proposes the creation of a special committee over which you will preside and which will supervise the implementation, but the implementation of what? The implementation of technical measures relating to the approval in principle of the first part of the motion, the broadcasting of the debates, which, Mr. Speaker, indicates that the government will study the technical details when and only when the broadcasting of the debates will have been adopted in principle.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to the opinion of my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) who referred to citation 203(1) of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms where it is said that the essence of a proposed amendment should not be changed, the amendment that the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) proposed does not change the government motion. As far as I know after reading and rereading it several times, it is not opposed to the broadcasting of the debates either.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Mr. Speaker, the amendment of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton in no way opposes the essence of the government motion, quite the contrary. But the principle or the aim of the amendment, and this is what we should remember, is that a special committee be created. Instead of proposing the creation of a special committee, the hon. member proposes to refer the matter to the Committee on Procedure and Organization. Before approving in principle the broadcasting of the debates, the hon. member proposes that we study right now the technical aspects relating to the approval of the broadcasting of the debates.

Mr. Speaker, consequently his amendment is not opposed to the essence of the motion presented by the leader of the government. Strictly speaking, we want to know if we are really going to be aware of the consequences of the broadcasting of the debates before or after approving the motion.

In his resolution the government leader proposes that we accept to have the proceedings broadcast and that a special committee be appointed under your chairmanship to supervise the technicalities of the implementation of such a resolution. The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) proposes that we do not oppose the televising of proceedings and that the question be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization—which already exists and which is a committee of the House of Commons—for a study of its technical implications. As the second paragraph of the resolution puts it:

That the cost and technical studies of building, equipment, personnel and other requirements consequent upon the introduction of radio and television broadcasting of the House of Commons and its committees be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization for study and report.

The question before us therefore is not whether to refer to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization the principle of broadcasting House proceedings, for that would not be the situation if we were to adopt the resolution of the hon. member of Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker). This committee would not be responsible for studying the principle of broadcasting House proceedings. This is irrelevant and therefore I submit that the motion of the hon. member of Grenville-Carleton is in order; it would allow us, before we start broadcasting House proceedings, to know what are the technical implications, the costs, the periods of broadcasting and what consequences it would have on the rights and immunity of the members of the House. I sincerely hope that Your Honour will recognize that the amendment moved by my colleague the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton is in order.

[English]

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for indicating that I might be able to say something at the close about what has been said during the course of this discussion. With respect, I do not think I should deal in considerable detail with the provisions in our rules referred to by the parliamentary secretary. He referred to citation 202 of Beauchesne's, I think paragraph (6), and I think he also referred to citation 201. However, I gather from what Your