

Routine Proceedings

I was particularly interested in his comments about televising certain committees. I certainly agree with that. The Canadian public wants the government to be more open. A good way to do that is to broadcast or televise certain committee deliberations. I say certain because there is a class factor here. We do have to think of the cost because this is the taxpayer's money. It would be great if we could televise the deliberations of all committees. I do not feel that is a practical thing to do because of the money involved.

As we all know in this House, committees do important work. Over the past number of years we have seen that committee work has become more important. As members of Parliament, we spend a great deal of time in those committees. If Canadians could watch the deliberations of these committees, they would have a greater understanding and knowledge of the issues and legislation that is before the House of Commons.

One committee I have the privilege to serve on is the conflict of interest legislative committee, an all-party committee made up of senators and members from the House of Commons. We meet every Tuesday and Thursday morning while the House is in session. We hope to have a report to the House by the end of June.

That committee is time-consuming but it is important. This whole topic of conflict of interest is one that is extremely important to the Canadian public. As you know, presently we do not have any legislation. We operate under a code that was brought in by the present Prime Minister.

An hon. member: That is a joke.

Ms. Callbeck: Clearly, that code is inadequate. We need legislation. We need strict legislation but it has to be legislation that is workable and reasonable. As I said, I feel that the public would find the deliberations of that particular committee extremely interesting and important.

An hon. member: Absolutely.

Ms. Callbeck: The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is also a member of that committee. I would like to ask that member if he feels that the public would benefit a great deal by being able to watch the proceedings of the conflict of interest committee.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I want to congratulate her for the fine work

she is doing on that committee. I am sure that her constituents would be very, very impressed were they given the opportunity to see the work that is being done by that member and others on that committee.

More important is the fact that we have listened to very interesting witnesses. For example, yesterday we had the Chief Electoral Officer for Canada before our committee. He answered questions for two hours in a very forthright manner. He was an excellent witness before our committee. We had the Assistant Deputy Registrar General for Canada. We had the Administrator of the Conflict of Interest Rules for the province of Ontario, *le jurisconsulte du Québec* and other witnesses like that.

• (1350)

An hon. member: Judge Parker.

Mr. Boudria: Justice Parker. You remember Justice Parker, Mr. Speaker, of the Parker commission of inquiry into the activities of Mr. Sinclair Stevens. I am sure everyone remembers that. Perhaps I can refresh the memory of members as to that issue. On second thought, maybe I should not. I will leave it at that. We had Mitchell Sharp and very, very many other such witnesses. They gave very good recommendations, not always identical but that is the job of our committee, to sift through all of that and arrive at legislation that will be workable yet tough.

My colleague brings a very good point. It has to be workable. There is no point in bringing a set of rules that is going to be breached by everyone. Of course you could argue it is not just the rules that have to be changed; it is the mindset of some people who are supposed to be living by rules and seemingly have some difficulty in doing so. That is a matter to be discussed some other time. The point my colleague was making is excellent. Canadians could see what we are doing in that committee. It is important work. They could view the witnesses, the advice they gave us. Of course they would feel, I am sure, that we are trying to repair some of that damage to our institution that has happened over recent years and trying to clean up what has happened. That is perhaps the very first committee that should be televised with the new rules we are discussing today and will be adopting very, very soon, as soon as all of our colleagues have finished making their excellent comments in regard to the motion that is at hand.