

Privilege—Mr. Knowles

1. The concept of an "electronic Hansard", which is central to radio and television coverage of the proceedings of the House, may not be applicable in the same way to standing or special committees.

2. Consideration of some procedures for coverage of committees has special urgency because of the evident anomaly of present coverage of the House but not of committees. Your committee, therefore, has arranged special meetings to hear representations from members of the press and our own technical advisers.

3. Since the order of reference of this committee includes coverage of the standing and special committees, it would be contrary to that order of the House for any radio or television coverage to take place in any such committee prior to consideration and authorization by this committee.

4. While the conditions are different, the same care must be applied to the introduction of radio and television coverage in the committees as was taken in ensuring the highest standards of coverage of the proceedings of the House.

● (2050)

While it is true that this report was not adopted by the House, clearly it reflected the original intention to introduce television only under the supervision of a committee.

Admittedly, there exists a hiatus in these proceedings, since the House has not seen fit to reconstitute a supervisory committee. Nevertheless, I cannot ignore the original intent of the House.

It was on this basis that the chairman of the Standing Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs ruled on October 25, 1979, that his committee did not have the power to authorize the televising of its proceedings. It was on this basis also that I wrote to the chairman of the Special Committee on the Handicapped and Disabled.

After listening very carefully to the debate this afternoon, I have not been persuaded to change my opinion, or to reverse the opinion of my predecessor, and I must hold the view that the televising of proceedings of standing and special committees of the House may be authorized only by the House itself.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: Therefore, it seems to me that there are two possibilities open to the Special Joint Committee on the constitution in this regard. Either the committee should make a special or interim report requesting such an authorization, or the House itself could give a permissive instruction to the committee, always bearing in mind the proprieties applicable to joint committees.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I have no question actually on your ruling but I do have, by way of a point of order, a question for the government House leader. Is he prepared now to consult with respect to the doctrine that will relieve the committee of any obligation it may feel to the contrary with respect to televising? Will he move a motion, and if he will not move a motion tonight, is he prepared to consult tonight so that we can have a motion tomorrow? I undertake that if we can agree, and I am sure we can, such a motion would go through without debate.

Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): All I need to say, Madam Speaker, is the obvious. If such a motion is

made—and we have been asking for it for a long time—as far as we are concerned, it will be passed immediately without debate.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, as I said this afternoon, we bow to your ruling. As suggested by my hon. colleagues, I shall seek further advice. We should be able to adopt a position on this within the next few days.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the budget makes a strong beginning toward implementing the government's major themes of industrial development policy.

Let us take the field of energy, for example. In the words of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen):

To fail to solve our energy dilemmas would be to fail to realize our greatest source of opportunity in this decade.

Putting this in another way, energy and the various issues related to energy, including price, security of supply and the manner and pace of energy source development, can be seen to pose, at one and the same time, both the greatest potential stimulus to growth and prosperity in our economy and, ironically, a most important potential constraint to that same growth and prosperity. Thus, there are enormous opportunities for industrial development arising out of our energy situation. Yet if, for example, the price of energy to Canadian users rises swiftly in line with the international price, the effects would be very disruptive.

With so much at stake, it is essential that we as a nation deal effectively with the problems and opportunities that energy and the energy sector present. This, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has done with the announcement in the budget of an extraordinarily far reaching and coherent national energy program. It is a program which will make energy a major factor in the solution of our broader challenges. It will provide Canadians with energy security, with the opportunity to participate, as owners, workers and business people, in energy development, and with fairness in the manner in which the benefits of our nation's rich resources are shared.

As Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, I want to emphasize particularly the substantial and numerous positive