

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, an application for a licence was filed with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission for the Canadian Parliamentary Channel, or CPaC. The Speaker of the House of Commons wrote to the CRTC requesting that the application not be proceeded with until Members of the House had had the opportunity to consider and present their views regarding the application. The CRTC has held the application in abeyance, pending the consideration of the CPaC proposal by the House of Commons.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedure and Private Members' Business received an Order of Reference from the House dated 5 April 1989 to examine and study the CPaC proposal. The Committee tabled its Second Report in the House on 25 May 1989, including various comments on the CPaC proposal. The Committee concluded that a thorough study of the broadcasting of the House of Commons and its committees should be undertaken in connection with consideration of the CPaC application.

Subsequently, on 8 June 1989 the House of Commons passed the following Order of Reference:

That the entire subject matter of both radio and television broadcasting of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, including the legal, procedural, and technical aspects thereof, be referred for examination, study and report, to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedure and Private Members' Business, with such study to include an examination of the subject-matter of the proposal by Cableco and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for a licence to operate a specialty programming network, styled the Canadian Parliamentary Channel (CPaC).

In accordance with this Order of Reference, the Committee undertook a comprehensive examination of the whole issue of broadcasting in the House of Commons and its committees. Letters were sent to all Members of the House of Commons soliciting their views on the issue of broadcasting generally, and the CPaC proposal in particular. Letters were also sent to members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery. Notices of the study were made and displayed on the existing Parliamentary Channel, and public service announcements were broadcast on the community channels of most major cable television operators. The Committee held a number of public hearings in Ottawa, at which various witnesses presented their views, and travelled to Washington, D.C. to view first-hand the operations of the C-SPAN, and CNN networks, and to Toronto to see the broadcast operations of the Ontario Legislature.