

*The Constitution—Joint Committee*

Finally, I am also conscious of the additional plea made last Friday by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) somewhat along the lines of the remarks he made during the course of the question of privilege he raised October 9 last. He expressed concern in these words:

—that we have a new dimension in this country which has a direct bearing and influence upon our proceedings in this House. That new dimension is the mass media and the access of the Government of Canada to that mass media—

He then went on to note:

—the access we have as Parliament to the mass media through the use of television cameras now in the House.

Of course, the House agreed to televise its proceedings. With respect to the use or misuse of the mass media because of access to it by government or, for that matter, by any person or group, when there is evidence of improper means of influence being brought to bear in respect of our proceedings, I can assure all hon. members that the dimension of contempt of Parliament is such that the House will not be constrained in finding a breach of privileges of members, or of the House.

This is precisely for the reason that, while our privileges are defined, contempt of the House has no limits. When new ways are found to interfere with our proceedings, so too will the House, in appropriate cases, be able to find that a contempt of the House has occurred.

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**THE CONSTITUTION**APPEARANCE OF MEMBER FOR PARKDALE-HIGH PARK BEFORE  
JOINT COMMITTEE

**Mr. Epp:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you are aware, the committee to study the constitutional proposals of the government was struck yesterday. Today I, as a member of that committee, and other members of that committee received a letter from the hon. member for Parkdale-High Park (Mr. Flis) in which he requests the right to appear as a member of Parliament before that committee as a witness.

I think this is rather an inappropriate manner in which to proceed before the committee even sits. Many members on this side of the House have raised this question. They, too, wanted the right to appear before that committee in view of the fact that closure had prevented them from speaking in this House.

The point of order that I am raising is quite clear: suspicion has now been raised and we would like to know whether or not members of the government have received an assurance from the House leader that they can appear before that committee, while such an assurance has not been given to other members of this House. It is obviously a double standard and a matter which should be clarified very quickly by the government House leader.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pinard:** Madam Speaker, as Liberals we respect the freedom of our members and I must say to the hon. member that the committee is master of its own procedure, that it is not

parliamentary tradition for the House of Commons to get involved in organizing the work of the committee, and that in this House we cannot decide any procedural question concerning the committee, unless we get a report from committees. The issue raised by the hon. member therefore is not a point of order and it cannot be entertained in the House.

[*English*]

**Mr. Clark:** Madam Speaker, the government House leader has declined to deal with the point raised by my colleague, the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) namely, whether or not there has been an instruction given or a signal sent by the government to members on one side of the House only. He neglected to deal with that question which was the substance of the point of order raised by my colleague. We would all like to know whether one story is being told on the government side of the House that is not being told to the public or to other members of the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pinard:** Madam Speaker, I can assure the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark) that no instruction was given to that effect. I am a little surprised that he even dared express doubts on that subject. I can assure him that we are not in the habit of granting more privileges to members of one party rather than to those of another. I for one have always advocated equality among all members in the House and perhaps that explains why we did not prevent our members from taking part in the first phase of the debate.

**Madam Speaker:** On that point of order I must remind the hon. member that, in my opinion, we all agree that committees are masters of their own procedure and that they have full leeway to call the witnesses they are interested to hear. Therefore I believe that if the hon. member sits on that committee he will be able to ask that question again and get the answer he hopes for from the committee members.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[*English*]

**ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT**

CHANGE IN NAME OF CONSTITUENCY FROM MISSISSAUGA  
NORTH TO MISSISSAUGA-MALTON

**Mr. Douglas Fisher (Mississauga North)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-618, to change the name of the electoral district of Mississauga North.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.