

*Routine Proceedings*

Does the hon. member think that in accepting and putting forward this proposal the government has really honoured the commitment to allow for televising of committees that it made when rule changes were made in the spring of last year?

**Mr. Riis:** Madam Speaker, in response to my colleague from Kingston and the Islands I certainly did encourage our colleagues on the committee—the hon. members for Oshawa, Thunder Bay—Atikokan, and others who participated—to support this. They did an excellent job in coming up with a unanimous report in terms of recommendations.

The point he raises is most appropriate. There was a willingness of members of the House to open up the system completely, to say that we have excellent standing committees doing work that ought to be made public, that the people of Canada ought to be made aware of, particularly when the government members simply ignore the reality, when they ignore the recommendations and opinions of people who understand some of these issues certainly better than we do.

There was a recommendation that we open up the committees, that we televise them or allow television cameras in, allow the media to come in and film the proceedings and tell the people of Canada what is going on.

The government chose not to do that and has come up with this rather laundered version of that feeling.

• (1250)

I suspect that in this business you sometimes simply inch forward. Having one committee room televised so that people can see the proceedings and the news media can take advantage of those proceedings on a regular basis will enable the government to see the advantage of opening up this process.

It does indicate a renegeing on the part of the government in terms of our original position. It indicates that it was not prepared to open up the House of Commons as we would have liked to have seen it done. However it is a small step forward and perhaps we should at least be thankful for that.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Madam Speaker, I just wanted to make it clear here that just

because committees can sit in this committee room equipped with television does not mean that the public will have access. The public will have access only if the news media decides to broadcast any part of it.

Some people might be confused in thinking that certain committees will be televised live to television sets right across the country. However, in effect, and this is what the House leader for the New Democratic Party confirmed, the opportunity would simply be there for television stations—

**An hon. member:** It will be live.

**Mr. Nunziata:** The member indicates that it will be live. What channel will be used? Perhaps I can put a series of questions to the hon. House leader. First, can he confirm that the proceedings of any committees sitting in that particular room will be broadcast live across the country?

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Can he also indicate the channel? Will it be the parliamentary channel or a separate channel? I would also like to ask the hon. member what the cost of all this is? Who will bear the cost of financing the implementation of the recommendations in the 23rd report of the House management committee? Surely, before the committee was in a position to make this recommendation it would have considered the entire cost of implementing the recommendations.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Unfortunately there is no time left for the hon. member for Kamloops to answer. Maybe he could do it in one minute or less.

**Mr. Riis:** May I make another suggestion, Madam Speaker? I appreciate that my time has run out but I think the questions raised by my hon. colleague are questions that will be on a lot of people's minds and are appropriate.

I personally was not a member of the committee. Therefore, I wonder if we could seek unanimous consent to have those questions directed to my hon. colleague who introduced this report for his response. I would need unanimous consent to have these questions directed to my colleague.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The House has heard the suggestion. Is there consent?