

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, I think the facts will show that I am not a member of that committee, that I have in no way influenced it in one direction or another—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** I hear a lot of "oh's" from the other side. If any single member had even the inkling of a clue to the fact that I had indicated any preference to any committee member, I wish he would stand in his place and contradict me.

**Mr. Clark:** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister indicated that the committee had decided. The House and the country know that the Liberal party had decided to vote against television and radio coverage of the committee proceedings.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** Let me ask the Prime Minister another question. Could he tell me and this House of Commons on what date he, or the government House leader, or the Minister of Justice, or any other minister, first became aware of the contents of the letter dated August 13 to the Liberal member of Parliament for Don Valley East, the chairman of the Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped? On what date did the knowledge of the contents of this letter dated August 13 become known to any minister of the Crown?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition in the preamble to his question indicated that the Liberal party had decided, if I had not. I fail to see how the Leader of the Opposition can draw that inference if I tell this House that there was no decision on my part and certainly none on the part of cabinet. Members, of course, are free to indicate their preference, but I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition and to every member opposite that it is the Liberal party as a government, after, I would say, years of dragging their feet by the Tories, which moved to bring television to the House of Commons.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** What date did you say—

**Mr. Trudeau:** As to the—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Clark:** I was going to remind the Prime Minister of the question, but perhaps he is going to answer it. What I want to know is—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Two people cannot have the floor at the same time.

**An hon. Member:** Sit down.

**Madam Speaker:** Did the Right Hon. Prime Minister have something to add to that answer?

**Mr. Trudeau:** I had, Madam Speaker, but if he prefers—

**Madam Speaker:** Then I will recognize the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Clark:** My question to the Right Hon. Prime Minister is, on what date did he or any minister of the Crown become aware for the first time of the contents of the letter dated August 13, 1980, to the Liberal member of Parliament for Don Valley East, the chairman of the Special Committee of this House on the Disabled and the Handicapped?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, I cannot speak for every member of cabinet but I can be quite precise in my answer to the Leader of the Opposition. It was exactly at 2.20 on November 6, 1980.

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—PRESENTATION OF INTERIM REPORT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Privy Council, and indicate to him that the entire press is not allowed into that committee; television and radio are not allowed in but, more importantly, Canadians are not allowed to view the proceedings of that committee either.

On October 29, 1980, at page 4214 of *Hansard*, in reply to my question about the proceedings of the committee the President of the Privy Council said the following:

—and that in this House we cannot decide any procedural question concerning the committee, unless we get a report from committees.

I should like to ask the minister if it is his interpretation that, should an interim report have been presented requesting the permission of the House to broadcast the proceedings of the committee on television and radio, that that, in fact, would have ended the life of the joint committee?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, the question has two faults: first, it is hypothetical and, second, it requests an opinion. I wonder how I could possibly answer a question that is so much out of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Epp:** Madam Speaker, a supplementary question for the President of the Privy Council. This is not hypothetical. The matter did come up and it would obviously influence the work of the committee. Because of that interpretation, I should like to quote from Beauchesne, at page 193, citation 591:

A special committee ceases to exist at the moment its final report is presented to the House.

My question relates to an interim report. Is it the policy of this government that, had a report been tabled in this House, in fact its members would be instructed to vote against it on the basis that the committee would end?