

Point of Order—Mr. McGrath

tion will not be permitted to travel outside of this capital city to the provinces and territories of our nation, that leads me to my next question.

Now that we have disposed of that, and the hon. member has to take responsibility for that decision on behalf of the government, is he now able to tell the House, in view of the support of this party, the official opposition, and the party to my left, the New Democratic Party, for having the proceedings of that committee telecast as an electronic *Hansard* in the same way the proceedings of this House are telecast, that the government is now prepared to make that decision, because it is not a subject for negotiation? It is a decision the government has to take on its responsibility. Having taken the decision not to allow the committee to travel in this country, surely it will follow that they will allow for the greatest public scrutiny by permitting the public broadcasting of the committee's proceedings.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: My colleague knows full well that the committee system as it is now makes it possible, in principle, to hold public hearings. Exceptionally, the committee may sit behind closed doors. First, I can assure him that we do not intend to hold the meetings on the sly. The meetings will be public. I think the media are sufficiently excited perhaps to show more interest in that committee than in others. So it is wrong and I know that my colleague does not intend to make people think that what happens in committee is secret. It will all be public. People have the right to participate. Accordingly, we will choose a large room and we will try to make the meetings as public as possible. This is my first point because this preamble implied that everything was done in secrecy. On the contrary, sittings are public and though 25 members and senators are designated there is nothing to prevent other members from participating in the sittings of a committee as my colleague must be aware.

As to televising the debates I answered those questions yesterday. The Prime Minister also answered questions from the Leader of the Opposition. I want to show respect for the committee. It is not yet constituted, and the senators who will be part of it will have to be consulted. It will be up to the committee to decide whether the debates should be televised. As to the material organization that would be involved that aspect would come under the responsibility of Madam Speaker.

We have stated that we were prepared to check if it is technically possible but, if it is indeed possible, and if such is the desire of the committee, we do not want this to have the effect of delaying the presentation of the committee report after December 9.

As emphasized by the member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), we insist that if it is technically possible it should be done in conformity with the concept of the electronic *Hansard*, just as it is the principle that guides the televising of the debates on the floor of the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I direct this to the government House leader and urge him to withhold making a decision on the question of travel until he has reflected on it over the weekend.

The government House leader has completely missed the point. The basis for the feelings expressed last night was expressed to members of Parliament from western Canada by the people in their constituencies, those who live in the cities and small towns of western Canada. Those feelings have been brought forward into this House in a nominal way. About 20 per cent of the members have been able to express their views. It seems that members opposite do not in any way understand the depth of those feelings.

The government House leader made reference to the fact that the feelings of people in western Canada have been known over the past few years and that they understand those feelings. I stress to him that there has been a significant change in the feelings expressed by those in western Canada in the last few weeks and months. It is those feelings which we feel so strongly should be presented to this committee. The only way that can be done is by having that committee travel.

I would also like to remind the government House leader there is a similar committee in the Ontario legislature on the constitution, a special committee, which chose to travel, not just within the province of Ontario but right across Canada. The feelings expressed to that committee were of great interest to the members and were different from what they had understood prior to going out. The depth of those feelings are expressed in their report. I can tell the government House leader that the report caused some stir within the Ontario legislature because it was different from what members had felt.

The government side has only two members to get an assessment of all that is going on in that part of the country, the four provinces and the territories. It is very important for the government House leader to reconsider his decision, if a decision has in fact been made, and report to the House on Monday. I do not think anyone in this House last night was not stunned and astounded by the feelings expressed by the members. It is the same feelings that members from the province of Quebec felt last March, April and May when in their own ridings. That is why they are feeling those sentiments today and that is why they expressed them so strongly last night. It is on that basis that I ask the government House leader to reconsider the decision he has just expressed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, some are impressed by the words of the hon. member, others are more impressed by those of the hon. members from the west or from the New Democratic Party. This is a matter of interpretation. I suggest that he read carefully the constitution proposal before the House and he will realize that it will benefit all Canadians, including western Canadians. Therefore, there is no reason to be con-