

(a) The extension of the protection of absolute privilege to Members of Parliament and Senators when speeches delivered in the Chamber or in a committee are transmitted by means of radio and television.

(b) The protection of the broadcasters of parliamentary proceedings by absolute privilege if they are employed by Parliament at times when they are discharging their duties under the authority of Parliament.

(c) The protection of other broadcasters of parliamentary proceedings by qualified privilege, thus placing them on the same footing as the press.

(d) The protection by absolute privilege of those involved in the simultaneous interpretation of parliamentary proceedings in either House or in a committee.

(e) The extension of the protection of absolute privilege to witnesses giving evidence before a parliamentary committee when their evidence is broadcast.

(f) The protection by absolute privilege of all parliamentary employees who might in any way be involved in the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings when acting under the direct instructions of either House of Parliament or their committees.

Anyone with a sense of fairness who reads something like this would, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, say that we go ahead at our peril and not only peril to members but to our staffs in this House. If some members of the press gallery were awake to the problems involved—some of the pundits in that gang or in that group—I will be a little more polite—and were not so conscious of their public image or potential public image and the role they think they might play in some future series of programs which they imagine will be like “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” or “Quentin Durgens, M.P.”, they would realize this.

It seemed to be implicit in the remarks of members who have spoken in this debate and others who have spoken to me privately that the proceedings of this House will appear on the networks across the country like one's wife's favourite soap opera—“Edge of Night” or the “Dilemma of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt)”!

Mrs. Holt: What is my dilemma?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I do not know what the hon. member's dilemma might be; that is what we would have to find out.

I must confess, Mr. Speaker, that I found some confusion between the thinking of the Chair and that of the hon. member for Saint-Jacques (Mr. Guilbault) who spoke afterwards. Members on the government side and the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Goodale) talked about extraneous matters in the resolution being a temporary or experimental installation, but the hon. member for Saint-Jacques said that is the way it has to go to get it in. The Chair, unfortunately, considered that to be an element of difficulty in the amendment put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker). It was strange to see that dichotomy in thinking. What is this going to include? If we are going to have radio on a continuous basis—which I think we can have and which the committee in 1972 was quite prepared to have—hon. members should read the comments of those members of the press gallery who were invited to comment at a number of sessions with regard to the quality of the broadcasting and reproductibility of our sound system, and they would see there was no hesitation with regard to broadcasting by radio providing we took precautions with

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regard to the law of libel. Then comes the question about television.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. Fleming) spoke of the great number of countries in which proceedings are televised. Let him read the report. I can add some details, Mr. Speaker. In Australia they have radio only; they would not touch television with a barge pole. In England they have gone on radio on an experimental basis just recently. They would not touch television with a barge pole except for ceremonial occasions such as the opening of parliament, which we have as well. Just in case somebody was impressed by the United States, let me tell them that television is not permitted in the Senate and House of Representatives except on the occasion of visits by the President, the presentation of the budget, and the annual State of the Nation message. In the Senate committees, under rule 11 they can decide whether they wish to have it.

Members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization of which Mr. Blair, now Mr. Justice Blair, was chairman—and I do not think the report suffered any detraction because I was vice-chairman—visited Washington and sat in on their foreign relations committee. That was a three ring circus if I ever saw one and the American Senators were the first to admit it.

The late Senator Fulbright, who was chairman of the foreign relations committee, was opposed to the Vietnam war and wanted to score some points against the administration in 1971-72. He called committee hearings to talk over this thing with someone from the Department of State and we saw Senator Fulbright make a 10 or 15 minute statement which was very partisan. He was chairman of the committee but he was leading with his own point of view so that it was on record for the American public. Various Democratic and Republican Senators took certain points of view and then they discussed the whole question with their witness.

Off to one side were a number of TV cameras with lights. At times the Senators asked that the lights be turned off because it was so hot. Still photographs were also allowed. As hon. members know, in the United States committee rooms there is a sort of curved table where members of the committee sit. At some distance is the witness table where counsel and assistants to the witnesses sit. Around there, crawling on their backs or their bellies like an assortment of snakes, were the photographers. They were trying to get angle shots either of the witnesses or of one of the Senators. Of course all the time there was the clicking of lights. I suggest that a three-ring circus would have been tame compared with that performance.

● (2100)

To those who have in mind the television coverage in European parliaments I will say that all their committees are *in camera*, every single one of them, and I include France, Germany, Denmark, Holland, and Sweden.

An hon. Member: Surely not Sweden.