

now for more than 25 years. Yet the focal point where all the diverse interests of our country come together to argue and debate and find consensus is still unavailable to those people who want to understand our system better. It seems to me that every concerned Canadian who believes that communications today are one of the major drawbacks to holding together this country should support this motion.

We are in an electronic age which is moving so rapidly it befuddles the mind. But these modern scientific advances must be used to help Canadians overcome pressures and misunderstandings. The greatness of our country is its size, its diversity and its potential. We have survived for over 100 years with geography that confounds us. Our mountain ranges run north to south while our country runs east to west. We have overcome huge distances and stayed together. In the past, despite communications shortcomings, we have managed to tell each other the story of ourselves and have survived.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I believe that few members of the House who are thoughtful about the Canadian situation would deny that we have a very real crisis on our hands, perhaps the greatest crisis we have ever had. If we cannot on all sides of the House of Commons agree better to communicate to the Canadian public the diversity of our nation and the efforts all of us are making, from every part of Canada, to solve our problems, then we are not going to have a united Canada in the future.

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering what has happened to the government's sense of priority. I have listened today to the speech of the government House leader, to that of the hon. member for York West (Mr. Fleming) and to other speakers, in the context of a parliament that is reassembling after a month's adjournment, and the first order of priority is whether or not we should televise and broadcast the proceedings of this House. What kind of a sense of priority does this government have?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** The answer is none.

**Mr. McGrath:** At a time when we are facing record high unemployment, when the Conference Board in Canada predicts that this year will see even higher unemployment, and reports in its latest findings that the five eastern provinces, for the year 1977, will have on average in excess of 10 per cent unemployment, we are debating this resolution. The two provinces with the highest rate of unemployment, according to the findings of the Conference Board, are Quebec and Newfoundland.

I heard the leader of the NDP speak with a great deal of feeling, he having made a tour of the provinces of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, about the situation that prevails there. In my own province, Sir, as of this moment we in fact have a real unemployment rate of 35 per cent. Some 55,000 people in my province out of a total work force of 183,000 are drawing unemployment insurance. In order to qualify for unemployment insurance you must be available for work. Another 9,000 are on short-term assistance. Some 64,000 people are drawing

### *Broadcasting House Proceedings*

unemployment insurance and able-bodied short term assistance. Statistics Canada is using new methodology, and it estimates that the rate of unemployment in my province is about 14 per cent.

Where are our priorities, Mr. Speaker? I sometimes wonder whether this place has lost touch with reality. Here we are discussing the tinsel, unreal world of television. I suppose in a way that is appropriate, because we all know that what goes on here is often unreal. It is certainly out of touch with reality for parliament to be seized today with a debate as to whether or not we televise our proceedings when the future of the country is at stake. There are stresses and strains on confederation today of a kind that have not existed in the last 100 years. We have unemployment today such as we have never seen since the second world war.

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I suppose it is appropriate that we should be discussing this resolution, but I would say to the House, let us get on with it. This resolution in one form or another has been with us since 1972, but there are some very important factors of which we seem to have lost sight. For example, what has become of the findings of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization which worked long and diligently during the last session of parliament? What happened to the report of that committee? There is no move by the government House leader, or the government, to bring forward a new reference to the committee so that report could be brought before the House. There was, indeed, no reference made today by the government House leader to the impact that this resolution will have on the rules of the House.

Let me make it clear that I support the principle of televising the proceedings of this House. My House leader has put forward the position of this party that we support the principle of this move. I also submit to you, Sir, notwithstanding the fact that you have yet to make a ruling on the amendment put forward by my House leader, that it would be logical to consider the impact this will have on the rules of the House by sending this resolution to the Procedure Committee. We should consider the fact that the findings of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization, structured during the last session of parliament to revise our rules, have yet to be brought before the House. We should further consider the fact that this reference in the last session to that standing committee did not cover rule changes in the context of televising or broadcasting the proceedings of this place. Surely if we are to contemplate this move we must do so in the context of the impact and the effect it will have on our procedures and standing orders.

It would seem to me to be logical and sensible for the House, having agreed to this matter in principle, to take the next logical step of referring this matter back to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization. That would give the committee the opportunity to assess the rules and the need to change them to accommodate the new effect television will have on the proceedings of this place.