

have prejudiced some witnesses as well as prejudiced the right of freedom of the press because they would not have been covered by immunity, in my opinion. Citation 21 of Beauchesne says:

The most fundamental privilege of the House as a whole is to establish rules of procedure for itself and to enforce them.

I suggested to the Chairman last night that he should consult with the Clerk and with you to find out what rules and procedures would prevail if the House decided to televise these proceedings. I quote again from Beauchesne, Citation 41(1):

The control of the House over its publications is absolute. And,

44(1) Unauthorized recording or broadcasting of debates is not allowed.

It was put to me at the time that the committee could do whatever it liked by unanimous consent. I think if you go back to the precedents you will find that this is not true. Committees, including this House for that matter, cannot do what is illegal or unauthorized by constitutional law or by practice simply by unanimous consent.

I would like to quote a few more extracts from Beauchesne which I think reinforce my point that the privileges of the whole House were threatened last night. Citation 75 concerns the extensions of privilege. It says:

Committee reports and the verbatim transcripts of committee hearings are documents published under the authority of the House and are entitled to the same absolute privilege as House documents.

The decision to televise proceedings of standing committees has not been taken by this House as yet, as far as I know, and therefore the absolute privileges of the House were not protected last night. I ask that you seriously consider the transcript of the committee hearings last night. I would like to make the point that I felt somewhat intimidated by the decision of the chair. Not knowing what our privileges would be had this proceeded, I felt the arbitrary decision of the Chair was unwarranted. If a witness before that committee, or anyone making comments, had been reported by the press, those statements could have been the object of some litigation. I suspect there could be a court of law which would have said that the witness or the person making those comments was not protected by parliamentary immunity and could have been subjected to some legal difficulties.

● (1510)

If you find that I have a *prima facie* case of privilege, I would be ready to move that the whole question of televising debates in committees be referred to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure for examination.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that I am not reflecting on the Chairman's judgment. Maybe the Chairman was trying to act in good faith, but I believe, in the spirit of trying to keep order and get things moving, that the Government should take action. I propose to the House that we extend media coverage to the committees of the House of Commons.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member for his intervention. It is inappropriate to attempt to move a motion in argument on

a point of order or question of privilege. The Hon. Member may very well want to move a motion at some appropriate time. That, of course, is open to him. I will hear other Members.

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the good will with which the Hon. Member has raised this point. I do not think this is a question of privilege. I have not had a chance to review the committee proceedings in any great detail, but I find the Chairman did say: "I have made my point so there is to be no recording of this meeting". I appreciate that the Hon. Member was present, observant and familiar with the rules of procedure. I think he took the right position and that, as a result of the interventions of the Hon. Member, the matter was resolved in an adequate manner.

I think this issue is within your jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, and that of the Board of Internal Economy on which all Parties in the House are represented. I think that is where the matter should be resolved. While it is timely to raise this problem, I think the solution to it should be reached within that forum.

Just in passing, I find it rather amusing that the Hon. Member referred to Beauchesne's Fourth and Fifth Editions. His House Leader suggested the other day that those rules were archaic and out of order. I just wanted to mention that.

**Mr. Gerry St. Germain (Mission—Port Moody):** Mr. Speaker, I am the designated spokesman for the Board of Internal Economy. As the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) has pointed out, the Board has representation from all Parties in this House. The McGrath Committee recommendations covered this subject. The Government has referred this subject to the Board and the Board has dealt with it and is in the process of attempting to implement a solution. We hope a solution will be found as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make two comments. First, this is not a question of privilege. I do not believe that the Member's privilege would have been in any way affected by what happened last evening.

My second point has already been partially made. This issue is being addressed by both the Board of Internal Economy and the Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure. I do not think the House need be seized with a motion to act because it is doing that through its various committees.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important, at the very least, for you to confirm rulings of previous Speakers that the broadcasting of proceedings of committees is not subject to decisions of individual committee chairmen or unanimous decisions by committee members. Rather, I submit that, as was the case with the broadcasting of the proceedings of this House, there must be an order of the House in order to permit committees to have their proceedings broadcast.