

*Routine Proceedings*

This is the fruit of the committee work. We did a lot of work in committee, and this is an opportunity for us to tell the Canadian citizens what in fact we did at the committee level.

When we were in Washington there was a scenario that really pointed out to the Americans what was wrong with their television coverage. They have I guess what one could call a late show in Congress. It takes place one hour after the sitting of the Congress is over. You put your name in and wait in line to give an hour speech on any topic you want to give a dissertation on. Everybody did it and it was going along fine until one night a congressman decided to put on a good show, a real grandstand exhibition.

He was in the House all by himself but proceeded to admonish the President of the United States. He said: "You, Mr. President, are going to have to answer to this". He referred to a number of people as if they were in the Congress when in fact there was not a soul save for himself.

At that point in time, Tip O'Neill, Speaker of the House at that time, saw this going on and said: "What is this man doing? I want it stopped immediately". He instructed the camera crew to pan to show who was really there, and there was not a soul. The real situation was exposed.

We have nothing to be afraid of. Let us expose what this is. There are people talking about other things, although perhaps some Canadians may think this is important. I personally do think it is important. Let us show them the real House.

As I speak I understand that there are probably 50 members sitting in committees. So members are working as there are 25 members in the House.

I suggest that if we provide enhanced coverage of the House more members would probably want to come to the House. They would want some more exposure. When you are here in the House you are able to ask questions in the comment and question period after someone has spoken. You can get some coverage, if that is what you are after. Also, if the cameras are allowed to pan, then probably not everybody would read their newspapers or do whatever they are doing. It would

almost obligate them to pay some attention to what is going on in the House.

There are some who have grave concerns. I think that they are unfounded. This situation will be monitored by our own, if you will. Some people may have difficulty with people policing themselves. I think we are going to tread slowly. I would be much less conservative, small "c", and we would take a bold step.

I read carefully who expressed concern. It seems that the majority of people who expressed concern are from the government side. They said that this would allow for more grandstanding. They seemed to say that opposition members would have just another forum to get more exposure, allowing us time to rail against government policy. Being a member of the opposition I can understand that. With the enhanced programming, phone in programs and other avenues, government back-benchers will be given more opportunities as opposed to fewer.

As far as reaction shots are concerned, I think that when someone asks a question of another person with great acrimony and indignation and after the camera moves to the one who is answering the question it behooves the questioner not to break into a smirk or a smile after having asked that acrimonious question. Again, this will be a self-policing device for members in the House of Commons.

In conclusion, I think this does work very, very well in the United States. It works very, very well in the province of Ontario. Our gravest concern with this whole issue is in terms of the pricing. We do not believe that Canadians should have to pay to watch their democracy, their elected members at work. If they come here in person, they can see it free of charge. The galleries are filled each and every day. We do not believe that they should be obligated to pay, but I say that in the full understanding that this measure will not go forward unless there is some charge.

I have suggested in the minority report, without knowing if we have the authority, that we put a cap on it for heaven's sake. I think it is eight cents now and ten cents after the next five years. We are suggesting maybe five cents and cap it at fifteen cents because it is supposed to be non-profit and the cable companies are going to pour all the excess revenue back into enhanced programming for Parliament.