

Routine Proceedings

I understand, according to our Standing Orders, there is reason for the two committees to have organizational meetings this afternoon and I understand that is all they intend to do at this time.

I am wondering if I could have unanimous consent to revert to that aspect of Routine Proceedings so that I can present this forty-sixth report.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the suggestion made by the hon. member. There is unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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[Translation]

STRIKING COMMITTEE

TABLING OF FORTY-SIXTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I have the honour of tabling the forty-sixth report of the Striking Committee.

[Editor's note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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[English]

ELECTIONS, PRIVILEGES, PROCEDURE

CONCURRENCE IN NINTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Milliken.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments of my friend, opposite, *vis-à-vis* televising committee sessions and I would like to put a different perspective to him.

Before the major change where committees were set up, all bills, whatever category, went through this Parliament. That did not work because Parliament could never come to an agreement as to the time allocation for debating bills. Contrast that with Britain and France and unitary states, where one Parliament has the whole range of legislative jurisdiction. That would mean all that we have federally as well as provincial legislation.

They found that the only way it works is to be able to have agreement. Even major bills might have only three or four speakers at second reading, then it would go into Committee of the Whole, with agreement. I like that model because I think it would keep us together much more as parliamentarians in this House, which should be the focus of power. However, that has not been the way. When television came to the House, nobody could be seen to be compromising on the television, so we had to set up committees. The compromises are made at committee stages because television is not there and people's constituents are not seeing them make compromises. My fear is that if we put television in the committees people will simply not be able to compromise and therefore will have to move to the steering committees and the power will be exercised there, again behind closed doors.

• (1150)

I would like my friend to comment on that because the other model would be to return the focus completely to this House. As we all know this House is absolutely meaningless other than when we stand and ratify a decision by way of a vote. It is totally meaningless. None of us attend. None of us read *Hansard* any more because this is not where the power is. Opinions are not changed in this House. It is only where the final vote is made.

Minds are changed at the committee level. I would rather see that back here. I know it is a radical model but I would like my friend to comment on it. If the parties would come together and agree to limited fixed debate in this House we could return the focus, the excitement, and the dynamism of politics to this House where I think it should be.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary has raised many interesting points and I do not know where to start because I disagree with him on several issues.

First, the shift to committees was to take consideration of the committee stage of bills out of the House, out of Committee of the Whole. Frankly, I think that was a very sensible decision.

Committee of the Whole is quite unworkable and it was not satisfactory for hearing witnesses. I think the thrust of our committee work on bills now is to hear expert witnesses on the bills so that we can consider much more about bills than ever could be done before in Committee of the Whole. I feel that that change has