

The Committee has devoted considerable thought to the question of who would decide which committees should meet in the specially equipped rooms, and therefore be telecast. This is a difficult issue, and there are many different options. There are various individuals or groups within the House that could be given the responsibility for making the decisions: the Speaker, the House Leaders, the Liaison Committee, among others. Besides the fact that all of these people are already extremely busy, the Committee is not convinced that it would be appropriate for any of them to make the decisions on a daily basis.

Some members of the Committee would have preferred that the decisions as to which committees should be broadcast be made by the programming committee of CPaC. Others felt that it was extremely important that the decisions be made by Members of the House of Commons. The Committee has concluded that the latter approach is more appropriate at this time.

Decisions about which committees should meet in the specially-equipped rooms should be made by the committee chairmen involved. We expect that in the vast majority of cases they will be able to arrange matters satisfactorily. Some committee hearings are very high profile, others particularly important, while yet others have a strong national dimension. It is also arguable that committees should be rotated, so as to enable different committees, Members and issues to be broadcast. Obviously, there are some hearings that the government would prefer not to see publicized, and others that the government feels are important and useful; similarly with the opposition parties. Many committee hearings do not need to be broadcast, and everyone recognizes this. In other cases, everyone acknowledges that certain hearings should be televised. It should also be pointed out that if several committees wish to have their meetings broadcast, they will probably be able to arrange to have their meetings at different times so that all can be accommodated.

The Committee has confidence that the committee chairmen will be able to resolve most conflicts among themselves. We note that in the Ontario Legislature, where there is only one specially equipped room, the committee chairmen are able to decide on the use of this room by themselves virtually all the time. In the event that they are unable to settle a dispute, the matter should be referred to the Monitoring Committee that we recommend later in this Report. This Committee will provide its advice as to the allocation of committee rooms. We expect this advice to be sufficient in most cases, although it would be possible in extreme situations for the Committee to table a formal report on the matter in the House of Commons.

We would expect that the televising of committee proceedings would be similar to the broadcasting of the House of Commons. As with the House, the producers will be expected to act responsibly, professionally and fairly. If certain committees are not being televised