

but it is an opinion that I feel strongly. I know it is going to favour the government, and therefore there may be some tendency on the part of the opposition to oppose it. That is a natural tendency. It will favour the government.

My friends on the right look at the latest Gallup poll and see themselves as the next government. The only thing I can say to them is that unless we settle what I think is a critical problem in this country between English and French Canada, there may not be a country for them to preside over even if they win the next election. For that reason, I think the most important contribution we can make toward understanding between English and French Canada is to put this House on television, and do it right away.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I should like to start my remarks by saying, first of all, that I am delighted to have the opportunity of taking part in this debate. I am of those who, publicly as well as behind the scenes, have worked for months, even years, to bring in this change which, to my mind, is essential. I mean, to take the debates of the House of Commons to all Canadians, through the most modern of media, namely television.

● (1630)

I must confess that for quite some time I used all the resources at my command and the influence I may have in Ottawa in an effort to convince government circles of holding a debate, as the earliest possible date, on the resolution before us today, which I shall endeavour to defend as best I can.

First I should like to stress the most important point, that whether we admit or not television is today the best of all means of communication. We have come a long way since Gutenberg discovered printing. The printed medium, which is still being used in all industrialized countries, is indeed quite different from television, in that it is a lineal medium. We learn what goes on by reading in a newspaper or a document a sequence of words, while television, through pictures, brings us information that is strictly global and which informs the spectator first hand. Television is the perfect medium, I repeat. Since the middle '60s, we have realized that the earthly globe is in fact an electrical network that links all human beings in such a way that they are no more and no less than tied to each other without being aware of it.

Perhaps the one who expressed this best is Professor McLuhan from Toronto who spoke the famous words that have now become a cliché: The medium is the message. In addition to being an extremely modern and a very powerful medium, television could solve today one of the most serious problems we are facing in the area of information. This problem which I would like to discuss for a few minutes is the growing lack of objectivity among newsmen, especially among writers.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State of Canada, I have relatively often the opportunity to meet people who produce programs for private or even public television and

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radio stations. Again last weekend, I had a discussion with the moderator of a very important and very popular public affairs program on the French network of the CBC who stated flatly that objectivity was a thing of the past. People in the field of information want to be able to say what they think, whether others agree with them or not, and I may be repeating the words of the previous speaker who, for his part, did not agree with them. Perhaps he is right. Perhaps people who work in the media should try to be more objective and to report events as they happen. But reality is different. Today's reporter wants to give his own opinion. And unless we censure and control what is happening in the information fields, I think that it would be very difficult for parliamentarians to change the situation. The only way to do so would be to give the spectators, the voters, direct access to the event, thus avoiding the screening now done by those responsible for information.

Direct access to the event is the central point of the present debate. The question we must ask of ourselves is as follows: Are we afraid that what happens in this chamber and which concerns everyone in Canada will be known directly by the public and that the public may judge the validity of the proposals debated in this House? This is the question. In my opinion, it is also the first good thing that would come out of broadcasting the proceedings of the House.

If it were possible, we, the government, the Liberal party, would like all Canadians to be able to get into this House at the same time to witness what we are saying, to hear what concerns them and to determine by themselves whether such a speaker is right or whether what another one is saying makes more sense.

This is not physically possible, but with the help of wires and cables, television will bring our speeches to the homes of all citizens who will want to tune in to the station carrying our message.

An hon. Member: The Conservatives are ashamed of that!

Mr. Guilbault: I think that one aspect—

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Would the hon. member allow a question?

Mr. Guilbault: I am ready to reply to the questions of the hon. member if he will allow me to conclude my observations. I think the one point we should not forget concerning the proposed program is that the material filmed or produced here would be available to the electronic media, that is television and radio.

So, far from undercutting the television stations, far from by-passing them, this proposal would allow them to obtain excerpts they could use which would only increase tenfold the potential work by the present media. I think we should immediately start the broadcasting on an experimental basis. I have it from Bell Canada that they could provide us on very short notice and at a minimum cost with a system that would allow us to reach the people who subscribe to the four cablevision companies in the Ottawa-Hull area. So those people