

about broadcasting will be realized. We accept that at its best television can educate people to the complexities of politics, of public issues and to the duties of citizenship. Televised proceedings have the potential to give viewers a better idea of reality than the hurried summations of reporters or the reworked and revised opinions we give downstairs at the scrum. People will have a chance to see that although there are elements of comedy and occasionally tragedy in this place, it operates mostly on hard work and long hours. Both criticism and praise for this institution and its members will have a firmer foundation.

As I said before, any reforms forced from outside may rebound to the benefit of parliament and not the executive. The need for a freedom of information bill will become obvious, as will the importance of real control by this House and its members of the estimates of the spending of government.

We should be willing to promote the maximum degree of public access compatible with our need to discuss seriously the nation's business, but there should be no confusion in our minds. This is not a step toward an open parliament. We already have that. It is, rather, a step toward an illustrated parliament. For if we are to have openness in this country, and if we are to have openness in respect of this government, more courageous action is required by the government, and that action we eagerly await. But from what we have heard in the last few days, we are, perhaps, not about to get it.

There are members in this party around me who advocated broadcasting House proceedings long before this motion was presented and, in fact, long before my predecessor in Grenville-Carleton led the original committee investigation. There are also people who have always had strong objections; objections which I do not think were considered as they should have been by those who drafted this preemptory motion. In a debate that concerns the nature—and I underline the word “nature”—of our roles as parliamentarians, we should not pretend to an artificial unanimity which does not exist.

A Progressive Conservative administration will view television in this House as an experiment. We will do what should be done by this motion, that is, set up the machinery for evaluation and review and decide whether to continue and, if so, on what basis. In the meantime, sir, it is unfortunate but true that what the predecessor to the present government House leader said on October 28, 1976, would occur has not in fact occurred. The hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Sharp), in an interview by William MacPherson of the Ottawa *Citizen* on that date, stated that the new resolution would contain all the proposed safeguards against interference with MPs privileges, something that is not evident in the present resolution nor the ones that he himself, as former House leader, put on the record.

We can speculate that the government is withholding these protections to which I have referred in my speech in terms of this resolution for some reasons of its own. I happen to think—and I hope this view is shared by people who care very much about this institution—that the reservations in the report of

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the committee of 1972 meant something and that the report of 1972 is not yet closed.

For these reasons and the reasons I have discussed, which will be expanded upon by other members of this House, I should like to propose an amendment to the resolution before us. I move, therefore, seconded by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn):

That the motion be amended by striking out all the words after the word “that” in the second paragraph, and substituting therefor the following:

“The cost and technical studies of building, equipment, personnel and other requirements consequent upon the introduction of radio and television broadcasting of the House of Commons and its committees be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization for study and report, and

That the committee examine the possible effect of broadcasting on the rights and immunities of members of the House and the rights and protections due to the public, such examination to include the subject matter of any relevant report made to the House by the special committee on the rights and immunities of members, and

That experimental broadcasts by radio and television of the proceedings of the House and its committees be undertaken in consultation with the committee, and

That the committee be authorized, in the light of such studies and experiments, to make further recommendations to the House before permanent broadcasting facilities are installed.

While that motion is being delivered to you, Mr. Speaker, I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to the tabling of the letter referred to during the course of the debate which was requested for tabling by the government House leader.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. In respect of this last point I would bring to the attention of hon. members that according to Standing Order 41(2) the tabling of documents can only be done by ministers of the Crown or by parliamentary secretaries. Let me refer hon. members to citation 159(3) of Beauchesne's fourth edition which reads as follows:

It has been admitted that a document which has been cited ought to be laid upon the table of the House, if it can be done without injury to the public interest. The same rule, however, cannot be held to apply to private letters or memoranda.

The hon. member is seeking leave as a private member to table a letter which he has not really identified to the Chair. Of course, the Chair is under the impression that it is a letter which was sent by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) to hon. members of the House, but it has not been identified as such. Of course, the House is the master of its own rules, but based on previous rulings by Mr. Speaker Lamoureux I would even hesitate to seek unanimous consent for the proposal of the hon. member to table the letter. I base that on a ruling of Mr. Speaker Lamoureux of March 20, 1973, as follows:

The rules do not, of course, provide for the tabling of documents, even official documents or so-called confidential documents, quoted in the House by private members. The rule only applies when such a document is quoted in debate by members of the government. It cannot apply to hon. members generally. The suggestion is very often made in debate, when hon. members refer to or quote from a document, that the document in question be tabled. Certainly we would become involved in a very complicated practice, a practice which could easily lead to abuse, if we made it possible for members generally to table documents. I think that is not the purpose of the rule dealing with the tabling of documents.