

what new incentive measures the Minister feels should be found in the broadcasting legislation.

As an active member of this committee, and an individual Member of the House, I ask the Minister now what type of incentives and respect can we expect from the public at large for a new round of studies when the Minister has responded with a cavalier attitude to our fifth and sixth reports.

If you should think that the case of the Minister of Communications is an isolated one, Mr. Speaker, let me remind you that the failure of Ministers to provide comprehensive reports is a malady which is not confined to this Minister.

Mr. Lewis: False.

Mrs. Finestone: During the previous month you already had before you for consideration two other alleged cases that different Ministers had failed to comply with the same standing order. I recognize as you wave that around that we have received an answer to one.

Mr. Lewis: Stick around.

Mrs. Finestone: I did not know that you are the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure that the Hon. Member's remarks which were directed at another Member in the House ought not to be taken as if they were directed to the Chair.

Mrs. Finestone: Please do not misunderstand my representation.

In conclusion, I have made a fairly lengthy presentation because there is at stake a more fundamental issue than whether the Minister of Communications does or does not submit the long-awaited Broadcasting Act to Parliament. It is not for me to decide how many more crystal balls the Minister requires as well as the Caplan-Sauvageau report, and our committee's reports. The fundamental issue is the sanctity of the committee system. It is whether our much heralded reforms of the committee system are mere words, to be avoided at the whim of an individual Minister who wishes to thwart the will of the House, or whether these are true reforms in the interests of promoting the role of individual Members of the House and its committees, which will be given effect to by the Speaker of the House. The matter rests with you, and I know that we can count on your good judgment.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Edmonton South (Mr. Edwards) on the same point of order.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton South): I rise on the point of order in my capacity as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture. On behalf of the committee, I would ask Your Honour to rule whether the response tabled in the House on August 26 by the Minister of Communications (Miss MacDonald) constitutes a comprehensive response as required by the committee under Standing Order 99(2). It is the unanimous view of the committee that the Minister's

Point of Order—Mrs. Finestone

response is not comprehensive, and thus not in keeping with the spirit or the letter of the reforms of Parliament.

Specifically, the response fails to deal with the substance of Part I of the committee's fifth report of April 27 which dealt with specialty services, a new satellite delivered generation of television services. The response neither accepts nor rejects any of the nine recommendations the committee made on the subject, nor comments on any of the analyses and findings of the committee, nor offers any reason why neither the recommendations nor the views expressed by the committee have been dealt with. To be fair and to be complete, the Minister agreed in principle with three recommendations made in Part II of the fifth report.

• (1520)

Both our fifth report, tabled April 27, and our sixth report, made May 6, dealt with matters pertaining to broadcasting, based on the recommendations of the task force thereon, the so-called Caplan-Sauvageau task force. That task force report, dealing with broadcasting policy and legislation, was tabled in the House by the Minister on January 29 of this year. On that date the Minister sought and obtained an order of reference that directed our committee to "report its findings and recommendations in all matters relevant to the development of broadcasting legislation no later than April 15, 1987".

A brief extension of deadline having been granted, the committee reported in full on May 6, outlining with unanimity 86 legislative recommendations in a detailed report comprising 117 pages of reasoned argument and representing 12 weeks of members' work in 42 sessions totalling over 100 hours of deliberations. The Ministry had 120 days or 17 weeks in which to prepare a response. Not one of the 86 recommendations was responded to.

The Minister in her response of August 26 has instead charged the committee with a fourfold new mission—to explore new technologies, to encourage Canadian programming within the limits of available resources, how to strengthen the CBC, and how to maximize use of government resources in program production.

These questions are pertinent, general ones designed to focus the committee's attention beyond the limits of the task force recommendations. They recall for the committee the fact that it must deal with broadcasting policy matters in addition to legislative matters. We know that; we have been studying policy matters since May 7. In fact, had we proceeded in logical order, we would have dealt with policy first, then legislation. However, the Minister wanted a Bill, she gave us a reference, and we complied.

I am mindful, Mr. Speaker, of the rulings made by your distinguished predecessor and by yourself on the issue of government response to reports of standing committees. I am aware, Sir, of Speaker Bosley's ruling of April 26, 1986 in which he said that Hon. Members would understand the Chair would be in a very difficult position were it to be called upon to